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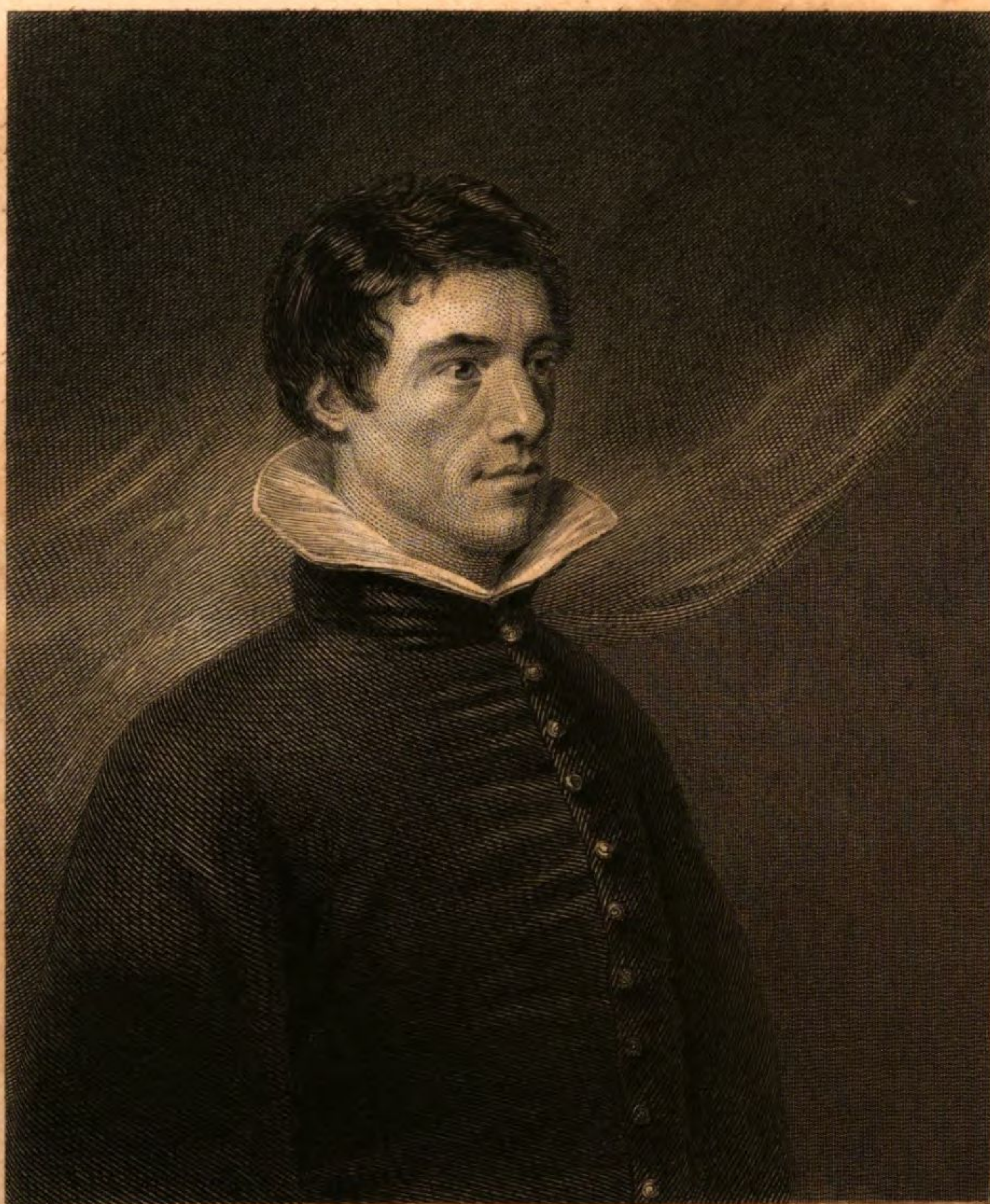
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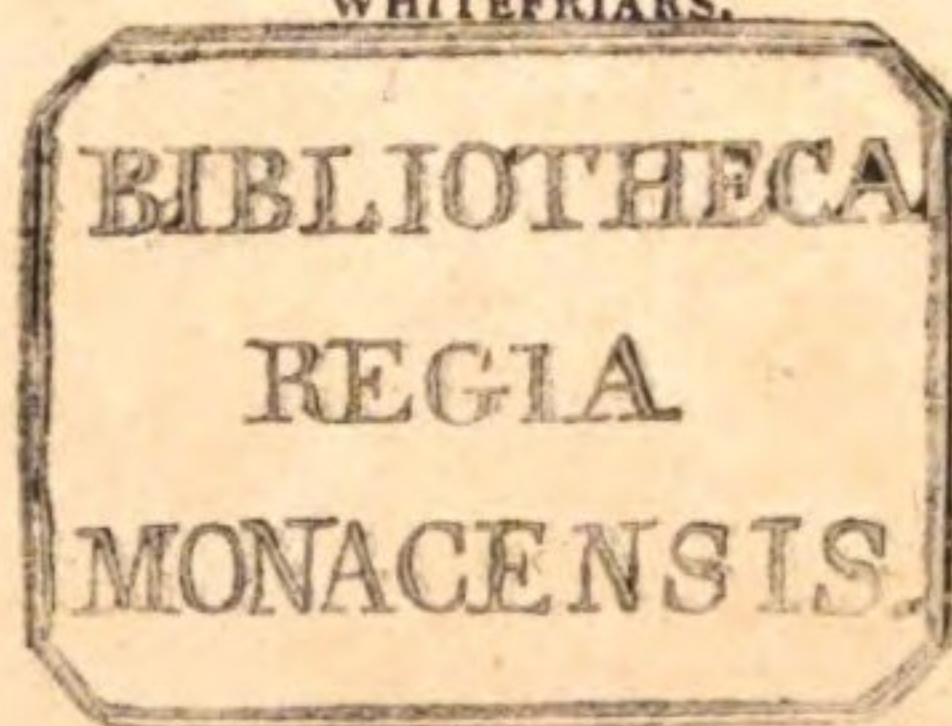
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TO

MARY ANNE LAMB,

*These Letters,*

THE MEMORIALS OF MANY YEARS WHICH SHE SPENT WITH  
THE WRITER IN UNDIVIDED AFFECTION ;

OF THE SORROWS AND THE JOYS SHE SHARED,

OF

THE GENIUS WHICH SHE CHERISHED,

AND OF

THE EXCELLENCES WHICH SHE BEST KNEW ;

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY THE EDITOR.



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## PREFACE.

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THE share of the Editor in these volumes can scarcely be regarded too slightly. The successive publications of Lamb's works form almost the only events of his life which can be recorded; and upon these criticism has been nearly exhausted. Little, therefore, was necessary to accompany the Letters, except such thread of narrative as might connect them together; and such explanations as might render their allusions generally understood. The reader's gratitude for the pleasure which he will derive from these memorials of one of the most delightful of English writers, is wholly due to his correspondents, who have kindly entrusted the



precious relics to the care of the Editor, and have permitted them to be given to the world; and to Mr. Moxon, by whose interest and zeal they have been chiefly collected. He may be allowed to express his personal sense of the honour which he has received in such a trust from men, some of whom are among the greatest of England's living authors,—to Wordsworth, Southey, Manning, Barton, Procter, Gilman, Patmore, Walter Wilson, Field, Robinson, Dyer, Carey, Ainsworth, to Mr. Green, the executor of Coleridge, and to the surviving relatives of Hazlitt. He is also most grateful to Lamb's esteemed schoolfellow, Mr. Le Grice, for supplying an interesting part of his history; and to Mr. Montague and Miss Beetham, for the remembered snatches of his conversation which accompany the closing chapter. Of the few additional facts of Lamb's history, the chief have been supplied by Mr. Moxon, in whose welfare he took a most affectionate interest to the close of his life; and who has devoted some beautiful sonnets to his memory.



The recentness of the period of some of the letters has rendered it necessary to omit many portions of them, in which the humour and beauty are interwoven with personal references, which, although wholly free from any thing which, rightly understood, could give pain to any human being, touch on subjects too sacred for public exposure. Some of the personal allusions which have been retained, may seem, perhaps, too free to a stranger; but they have been retained only in cases in which the Editor is well assured the parties would be rather gratified than displeased at seeing their names connected in life-like association with one so dear to their memories.

The italics and the capitals are invariably those indicated by the MSS. It is to be regretted that in the printed letters the reader must lose the curious varieties of writing with which the originals abound, and which are scrupulously adapted to the subjects. The letters are usually undated. Where the date occurs, it has generally been given; and



much trouble has been necessary to assign to many of the letters (the post-marks of which are not legible) their proper place, and perhaps not always with complete success.

Many letters yet remain unpublished, which will further illustrate the character of Mr. Lamb, but which must be reserved for a future time, when the Editor hopes to do more justice to his own sense of the genius and the excellences of his friend, than it has been possible for him to accomplish in these volumes.

T. N. T.

*Russell Square, 26th June, 1837.*



LETTERS, &c.  
OF  
CHARLES LAMB.

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CHAPTER I.

[1775 to 1796.]

LAMB'S PARENTAGE, SCHOOL-DAYS, AND YOUTH,  
TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS CORRESPOND-  
ENCE WITH COLERIDGE.

CHARLES LAMB was born on 18th February, 1775, in Crown Office Row, in the Inner Temple, where he spent the first seven years of his life. His parents were in a humble station, but they were endued with sentiments and with manners which might well become the gentlest blood; and fortune, which had denied them wealth, enabled them to bestow on their children some of the happiest intellectual advantages which wealth ever confers. His father, Mr. John Lamb, who came up a little



boy from Lincoln, fortunately both for himself and his master, entered into the service of Mr. Salt, one of the benchers of the Inner Temple, a widower, who growing old within its precincts, was enabled to appreciate and to reward his devotedness and intelligence; and to whom he became, in the language of his son, "his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his flapper, his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer."\* Although contented with his lot, and discharging its

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\* Lamb has given characters of his father (under the name of Lovel), and of Mr. Salt, in one of the most exquisite of all the Essays of Elia—"The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple." Of Lovel, he says, "He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow with all, and could smite. In the cause of the oppressed, he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality, that had drawn upon him, and pummelled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bareheaded to the same person, modestly to excuse his interference; for L. never forgot rank where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing; had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble; possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior; moulded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage-boards and such small toys to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest griefs and conceits; and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover; and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a fishing with."—*Prose Works*, vol. ii. p. 199.



duties with the most patient assiduity, he was not without literary ambition; and having written some occasional verses to grace the festivities of a benefit society of which he was a member, was encouraged by his brother members to publish, in a thin quarto, "Poetical Pieces on several occasions." This volume contains a lively picture of the life of a lady's footman of the last century; the "History of Joseph," told in well-measured, heroic couplets; and a pleasant piece, after the manner of "Gay's Fables," entitled the "Sparrow's Wedding," which was the author's favourite, and which, when he fell into the dotage of age, he delighted to hear Charles read.\* His wife was a

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\* The following little poem, entitled "A Letter from a Child to its Grandmother," written by Mr. John Lamb for his eldest son, though possessing no merit beyond simplicity of expression, may show the manner in which he endeavoured to discharge his parental duties:—

" Dear Grandam,  
                                 Pray to God to bless  
 Your grandson dear, with happiness;  
 That, as I do advance each year,  
 I may be taught my God to fear;  
 My little frame from passion free,  
 To man's estate from infancy;  
 From vice, that turns a youth aside,  
 And to have wisdom for my guide;  
 That I may neither lie nor swear,  
 But in the path of virtue steer;



woman of appearance so matronly and commanding that, according to the recollection of one of Lamb's dearest schoolmates, "she might be taken for a sister of Mrs. Siddons." This excellent couple were blessed with three children, John, Mary, and Charles; John being twelve and Mary ten years older than Charles. John, who is vividly described in the essay of Elia, entitled "My Relations," under the name of James Elia, rose to fill a lucrative office in the South Sea House, and died a few years ago, having to the last fulfilled the affectionate injunction of Charles, to "keep the elder brother up in state." Mary (the Bridget of the same essay) still survives, to mourn the severance of a life-long association, as free from every alloy of selfishness, as remarkable for moral beauty, as this world ever witnessed in brother and sister.

On the 9th of October, 1782, when Charles Lamb had attained the age of seven, he was presented to the school of Christ's Hospital, by Timothy Yeates, Esq., Governor, as "the son of

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My actions generous, firm, and just,  
 Be always faithful to my trust;  
 And thee the Lord will ever bless.  
 Your grandson dear,

JOHN L——, the Less.



John Lamb, scrivener, and Elizabeth his wife," and remained a scholar of that noble establishment till he had entered into his fifteenth year. Small of stature, delicate of frame, and constitutionally nervous and timid, he would seem unfitted to encounter the discipline of a school formed to restrain some hundreds of lads in the heart of the metropolis, or to fight his way among them. But the sweetness of his disposition won him favour from all; and although the antique peculiarities of the school tinged his opening imagination, they did not sadden his childhood. One of his school-fellows, of whose genial qualities he has made affectionate mention in his "Recollections of Christ's Hospital," Charles V. Le Grice, now of Treriefe, near Penzance, has supplied me with some particulars of his school-days, for which friends of a later date will be grateful. "Lamb," says Mr. Le Grice, "was an amiable gentle boy, very sensible and keenly observing, indulged by his schoolfellows and by his master on account of his infirmity of speech. His countenance was mild; his complexion clear brown, with an expression which might lead you to think that he was of Jewish descent. His eyes were not each of the same colour, one was hazel, the other had specks of grey in the iris, mingled as we



see red spots in the blood-stone. His step was plantigrade, which made his walk slow and peculiar, adding to the staid appearance of his figure. I never heard his name mentioned without the addition of Charles, although, as there was no other boy of the name of Lamb, the addition was unnecessary; but there was an implied kindness in it, and it was a proof that his gentle manners excited that kindness."

"His delicate frame and his difficulty of utterance, which was increased by agitation, unfitted him for joining in any boisterous sport. The description which he gives, in his 'Recollections of Christ's Hospital,' of the habits and feelings of the school-boy, is a true one in general, but is more particularly a delineation of himself—the feelings were all in his own heart—the portrait was his own: 'While others were all fire and play, he stole along with all the self-concentration of a young monk.' These habits and feelings were awakened and cherished in him by peculiar circumstances; he had been born and bred in the Inner Temple; and his parents continued to reside there while he was at school, so that he passed from cloister to cloister, and this was all the change his young mind ever knew. On every half-holiday (and there were two in the week) in ten



minutes he was in the gardens, on the terrace, or at the fountain of the Temple: here was his home: here his recreation: and the influence they had on his infant mind is vividly shown in his description of the old Benchers. He says, 'I was born and passed the first seven years of my life in the Temple,' he might have added, that here he passed a great portion of the second seven years of his life, a portion which mixed itself with all his habits and enjoyments, and gave a bias to the whole. Here he found a happy home, affectionate parents, and a sister who watched over him to the latest hour of his existence (God be with her!) with the tenderest solicitude; and here he had access to the library of Mr. Salt, one of the Benchers, to whose memory his pen has given in return for this and greater favours—I do not think it extravagant to say—immortality. To use his own language, 'Here he was tumbled into a spacious closet of good old English reading, where he browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage.' He applied these words to his sister; but there is no doubt they 'browsed' together; they had walked hand in hand from a time 'extending beyond the period of their memory.' ”

When Lamb quitted school, he was in the lower division of the second class—which in the language



of the school is termed “being in Greek, but not Deputy Grecian.” He had read Virgil, Sallust, Terence, selections from Lucian’s Dialogues, and Xenophon; and had evinced considerable skill in the niceties of Latin composition, both in prose and verse. His docility and aptitude for the attainment of classical knowledge would have ensured him an exhibition; but to this the impediment in his speech proved an insuperable obstacle. The exhibitions were given under the implied, if not expressed condition of entering into the Church; the whole course of education was preparatory to that end; and, therefore Lamb, who was unfitted by nature for the clerical profession, was not adopted into the class which led to it; and quitted school to pursue the uncongenial labour of the “desk’s dull wood.” To this apparently hard lot he submitted with cheerfulness, and saw his schoolfellows of his own standing depart, one after another, for the University without a murmur. This acquiescence in his different fortune must have been a hard trial for the sweetness of his disposition; as he always, in after life, regarded the ancient seats of learning with the fondness of one who had been hardly divorced from them. He delighted, when other duties did not hinder, to pass his vacations in their neighbourhood, and indulge in that fancied



association with them which he has so beautifully mirrored in his "Sonnet written at Cambridge."\* What worldly success can, indeed, ever compensate for the want of timely nurture beneath the shade of one of these venerable institutions—for the sense of antiquity shading, not checking, the joyous impulses of opening manhood—for the refinement and the grace there interfused into the long labour of ambitious study—for young friendships consecrated by the associations of long past time; and for liberal emulation, crowned by successes restrained from ungenerous and selfish pride by palpable symbols of the genius and the learning of ages?

On 23d November 1789, Lamb finally quitted

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\* I was not trained in academic bowers,  
 And to those learned streams I nothing owe,  
 Which copious from those fair twin founts do flow;  
 Mine have been any thing but studious hours.  
 Yet can I fancy wandering 'mid thy towers  
 Myself, a nursling, Granta, of thy lap;  
 My brow seems tightening with the doctor's cap,  
 And I walk gowned: feel unusual powers.  
 Strange forms of logic clothe my admiring speech;  
 Old Rama's ghost is busy at my brain;  
 And my skull teems with notions infinite.  
 Be still, ye reed of Comus, while I teach  
 Truths, which transcend the searching schoolman's vein,  
 And half had staggered that stout Stagyrice!



Christ's Hospital for the abode of his parents, who still resided in the Temple. At first he was employed in the South Sea House, under his brother John; but, on 5th April 1792, he obtained an appointment in the accountant's-office of the East India Company. His salary, though then small, was a welcome addition to the scanty means of his parents; who now were unable, by their own exertions, to increase it, his mother being in ill health, which confined her to her bed, and his father sinking into dotage. On their comfort, however, this, and what was more precious to him, his little leisure, were freely bestowed; and his recreations were confined to a delightful visit to the two-shilling gallery of the theatre, in company with his sister, and an occasional supper with some of his schoolmates, when in town, from Cambridge. On one of these latter occasions, he obtained the appellation of *Guy*, by which he was always called among them; but of which few of his late friends heard till after his death. "In the first year of his clerkship," says Mr. Le Grice, in the communication with which he favoured me, "Lamb spent the evening of the 5th November with some of his former schoolfellows, who, being amused with the particularly large and flapping brim of his round



hat, pinned it up on the sides in the form of a cocked-hat. Lamb made no alteration in it, but walked home in his usual sauntering gait towards the Temple. As he was going down Ludgate-hill, some gay young men, who seemed not to have passed the London Tavern without resting, exclaimed ‘the veritable Guy!—no man of straw!’ and with this exclamation they took him up, making a chair with their arms, carried him, seated him on a post in St. Paul’s-churchyard, and there left him. This story Lamb told so seriously, that the truth of it was never doubted. He wore his three-cornered hat many evenings, and retained the name of Guy ever after. Like Nym, he quietly sympathised in the fun, and seemed to say, ‘that was the humour of it.’ A clergyman of the city lately wrote to me, ‘I have no recollection of Lamb. There was a gentleman called Guy, to whom you once introduced me, and with whom I have occasionally interchanged nods for more than thirty years; but how is it that I never met Mr. Lamb? If I was ever introduced to him, I wonder that we never came in contact during my residence for ten years in Edmonton.’ Imagine this gentleman’s surprise when I informed him that his



nods to Mr. Guy had been constantly reciprocated by Mr. Lamb !”

During these years Lamb's most frequent companion was James White, or rather, Jem White, as he always called him. Lamb always insisted that for hearty joyous humour, tinged with Shakspearian fancy, Jem never had an equal. “Jem White !” said he to Mr. Le Grice, when they met for the last time, after many years' absence, at the Bell at Edmonton, in June 1833, “there never was his like ! We never shall see such days as those in which Jem flourished !” All that now remains of Jem is the celebration of the suppers which he gave the young chimney-sweepers, in the *Elia* of his friend, and a thin duodecimo volume, which he published in 1796, under the title of the “Letters of Sir John Falstaff, with a dedication (printed in black letter) to Master Samuel Irelaunde,” which those who knew Lamb at the time believed to be his. “White's Letters,” said Lamb, in a letter to a friend about this time, “are near publication. His frontispiece is a good conceit ; Sir John learning to dance to please Madame Page, in dress of doublet, &c. from the upper half, and modern pantaloons, with shoes of the



eighteenth century, from the lower half, and the whole work is full of goodly quips and rare fancies, 'all deeply masked like hoar antiquity'—much superior to Dr. Kenrick's 'Falstaff's Wedding.'” The work was neglected, although Lamb exerted all the influence he subsequently acquired with more popular writers to obtain for it favourable notices, as will be seen from various passages in his letters. He stuck, however, gallantly by his favourite protégé; and even when he could little afford to disburse sixpence, he made a point of buying a copy of the book whenever he discovered one amidst the refuse of a bookseller's stall, and would present it to a friend in the hope of making a convert. He gave me one of these copies soon after I became acquainted with him, stating that he had purchased it in the morning for sixpence, and assuring me I should enjoy a rare treat in the perusal; but, if I must confess the truth, the mask of quaintness was so closely worn, that it nearly concealed the humour. To Lamb it was, doubtless, vivified by the eye and voice of his old boon companion, forming to him an undying commentary; without which it was comparatively spiritless. Alas! how many even of his own most delicate fancies, rich as they are in feeling and in wisdom, will



be lost to those who have not present to them the sweet broken accents, and the half playful, half melancholy smile of the writer !

But if Jem White was the companion of his lighter moods, the friend of his serious thoughts was a person of far nobler powers—Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was his good fortune to be the school-fellow of that extraordinary man ; and if no particular intimacy had been formed between them at Christ's Hospital, a foundation was there laid for a friendship to which the world is probably indebted for all that Lamb has added to its sources of pleasure. Junior to Coleridge by two years, and far inferior to him in all scholastic acquirements, Lamb had listened to the rich discourse of “ the inspired charity-boy ” with a wondering delight, pure from all envy, and, it may be, enhanced by his sense of his own feebleness and difficulty of expression. While Coleridge remained at the university, they met occasionally on his visits to London ; and when he quitted it, and came to town, full of mantling hopes and glorious schemes, Lamb became his admiring disciple. The scene of these happy meetings was a little public-house, called the Salutation and Cat, in the neighbourhood of Smithfield, where they used to sup, and



remain long after they had "heard the chimes at midnight." There they discoursed of Bowles, who was the god of Coleridge's poetical idolatry, and of Burns and Cowper, who, of recent poets, in that season of comparative barrenness, had made the deepest impression on Lamb. There Coleridge talked of "Fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute" to one who desired "to find no end" of the golden maze; and there he recited his early poems with that deep sweetness of intonation which sunk into the heart of his hearer. To these meetings Lamb was accustomed at all periods of his life to revert, as the season when his finer intellects were quickened into action. Shortly after they had terminated, with Coleridge's departure for London, he thus recalled them in a letter.\* "When I read in your little volume the effusion you call 'the Sigh,' I think I hear you again. I imagine to myself the little smoky room at the Salutation and Cat, where we sat together through the winter nights beguiling the cares of life with poetry." This was early in

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\* This, with other passages I have interwoven with my own slender thread of narration, are from letters which I have thought either too personal for entire publication at present, or not of sufficient interest, in comparison with others, to occupy a portion of the space to which the letters are limited.



1796 ; and in 1818, when dedicating his works, then first collected, to his earliest friend, he thus spoke of the same meetings. “ Some of the sonnets, which shall be carelessly turned over by the general reader, may happily awaken in you remembrances which I should be sorry to doubt are totally extinct,—the memory ‘ of summer days and of delightful years,’ even so far back as those old suppers at our old inn—when life was fresh, and topics exhaustless,—and you first kindled in me, if not the power, yet the love of poetry, and beauty, and kindliness.” And so he talked of these unforgotten hours in that short interval during which death divided them !

The warmth of Coleridge’s friendship supplied the quickening impulse to Lamb’s genius ; but the germ enfolding all its nice peculiarities lay ready for the influence, and expanded into forms and hues of its own. Lamb’s earliest poetry was not a faint reflection of Coleridge’s, such as the young lustre of original genius may cast on a polished and sensitive mind, to glow and tremble for a season, but was streaked with delicate yet distinct traits, which proved it an emanation from within. There was, indeed, little resemblance between the two, except in the affection which they bore towards



each other. Coleridge's mind, not laden as yet with the spoils of all systems, and of all times, glowed with the ardour of uncontrollable purpose, and thirsted for glorious achievement and universal knowledge. The imagination, which afterwards struggled gloriously but perhaps vainly to overmaster the stupendous clouds of German philosophies, breaking them into huge masses, and tinting them with heavenly hues,\* then shone through the simple articles of Unitarian faith, the graceful architecture of Hartley's theory, and the well-compacted chain by which Priestley and Edwards seemed to bind all things in necessary connexion, as through transparencies of thought; and, finding no opposition worthy of its activity in this poor foreground of the mind, opened for itself a bright succession of fairy visions, which it sought to realize on earth. In its light, oppression and force seemed to vanish like the phantoms of a feverish dream; mankind were disposed in the picturesque groups of universal brotherhood; and, in far distance, the ladder which Jacob saw in solemn vision connected earth with heaven, "and the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it." Lamb had no sympathy with these radiant hopes, except as they were part of his friend. He clung to



the realities of life ; to things nearest to him, which the force of habit had made dear ; and caught tremblingly hold of the past. He delighted, indeed, to hear Coleridge talk of the distant and future ; to see the palm-trees wave, and the pyramids tower in the long perspective of his style ; and to catch the prophetic notes of a universal harmony trembling in his voice ; but the pleasure was only that of admiration unalloyed by envy, and of the generous pride of friendship. The tendency of his mind to detect the beautiful and good in surrounding things, to nestle rather than to roam, was cherished by all the circumstances of his boyish days. He had become familiar with the vestiges of antiquity, both in his school and in his home of the Temple ; and these became dear to him in his serious and affectionate childhood. But, perhaps, more even than those external associations, the situation of his parents, as it was elevated and graced by their character, moulded his young thoughts to the holy habit of a liberal obedience, and unaspiring self-respect, which led rather to the embellishment of what was near than to the creation of visionary forms. He saw at home the daily beauty of a cheerful submission to a state bordering on the servile ; he looked upward



to his father's master, and the old benchers who walked with him on the stately terrace, with a modest erectness of mind ; and he saw in his own humble home how well the decencies of life could be maintained on slender means, by the exercise of generous principle. Another circumstance, akin to these, tended also to impart a tinge of venerableness to his early musings. His maternal grandmother was for many years housekeeper in the old and wealthy family of the Plumers of Hertfordshire, by whom she was held in true esteem ; and his visits to their ancient mansion, where he had the free range of every apartment, gallery and terraced-walk, gave him "a peep at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune," and an alliance with that gentility of soul, which, to appreciate, is to share. He has beautifully recorded his own recollections of this place in the essay entitled, "Blakesmoor in H——shire," in which he modestly vindicates his claim to partake in the associations of ancestry not his own, and shows the true value of high lineage by detecting the spirit of nobleness which breathes around it, for the enkindling of generous affections, not only in those who may boast of its possession, but in all who can feel its influences.



While the bias of the minds of Coleridge and Lamb thus essentially differed, it is singular that their opinions on religion, and on those philosophical questions which border on religious belief, and receive their colour from it, agreed, although probably derived from various sources. Both were Unitarians, ardent admirers of the writings and character of Dr. Priestley, and both believers in necessity, according to Priestley's exposition, and in the inference which he drew from that doctrine respecting moral responsibility, and the ultimate destiny of the human race. The adoption of this creed arose in Lamb from the accident of education; he was brought up to receive and love it; and attended, when circumstances permitted, at the chapel at Hackney, of which Mr. Belsham, afterwards of Essex Street, was then the minister. It is remarkable that another of Lamb's most intimate friends, in whose conversation, next to that of Coleridge, he most delighted, Mr. Hazlitt, with whom he became acquainted at a subsequent time, and who came from a distant part of the country, was educated in the same faith. With Coleridge, whose early impressions were derived from the rites and services of the Church of England, Unitarianism was the result of a strong conviction; so



strong, that with all the ardour of a convert, he sought to win proselytes to his chosen creed, and purposed to spend his days in preaching it. Neither of these young men, however, long continued to profess it. Lamb, in his maturer life, rarely alluded to matters of religious doctrine; and when he did so, evinced no sympathy with the professors of his once loved creed. Hazlitt wrote of his father, who was a Unitarian minister at Wem, with honouring affection; and of his dissenting associates with respect, but he had obviously ceased to think or feel with them; and Coleridge's Remains indicate, what was well known to all who enjoyed the privilege of his conversation, that he not only reverted to a belief in the Trinitarian mysteries, but that he was accustomed to express as much distaste for Unitarianism, and for the spirit of its more active advocates, as the benignity of his nature would allow him to feel for any human opinion honestly cherished. Perhaps this solitary approach to intolerance in the universality of Coleridge's mind arose from the disapproval with which he might justly regard his own pride of understanding, as excited in defence of the doctrines he had adopted. To him there was much of devotional thought to be violated, many reverential associations, inter-



twined with the moral being, to be rent away in the struggle of the intellect to grasp the doctrines which were alien to its nurture. But to Lamb these formed the simple creed of his childhood; and slender and barren as they seem, to those who are united in religious sympathy with the great body of their fellow-countrymen, they sufficed for affections which had so strong a tendency to find out resting places for themselves as his. Those who only knew him in his latter days, and who feel that if ever the spirit of Christianity breathed through a human life, it breathed in his, will, nevertheless, trace with surprise the extraordinary vividness of impressions directly religious, and the self-jealousy with which he watched the cares and distractions of the world, which might efface them in his first letters. If in a life of ungenial toil, diversified with frequent sorrow, the train of these solemn meditations was broken; if he was led, in the distractions and labours of his course, to cleave more closely to surrounding objects than those early aspirations promised; if, in his cravings after immediate sympathy, he rather sought to perpetuate the social circle which he charmed, than to expatiate in scenes of untried being; his pious feelings were only diverted, not destroyed. The stream



glided still, the under current of thought, sometimes breaking out in sallies which strangers did not understand, but always feeding and nourishing the most exquisite sweetness of disposition, and the most unobtrusive proofs of self-denying love.

While Lamb was enjoying habits of the closest intimacy with Coleridge in London, he was introduced by him to a young poet whose name has often been associated with his—Charles Lloyd—the son of a wealthy banker at Birmingham, who had recently cast off the trammels of the Society of Friends, and smitten with the love of poetry, had become a student at the University of Cambridge. There he had been attracted to Coleridge by the fascination of his discourse; and having been admitted to his regard, was introduced by him to Lamb. Lloyd was endeared both to Lamb and Coleridge by a very amiable disposition and a pensive cast of thought; but his intellect bore little resemblance to that of either. He wrote, indeed, pleasing verses and with great facility,—a facility fatal to excellence; but his mind was chiefly remarkable for the fine power of analysis which distinguishes his “London,” and other of his later compositions. In this power of discriminating and distinguishing—carried to a pitch almost of pain-



fulness—Lloyd has scarcely been equalled; and his poems, though rugged in point of versification, will be found by those who will read them with the calm attention they require, replete with critical and moral suggestions of the highest value. He and Coleridge were devoted wholly to literary pursuits; while Lamb's days were given to accounts, and only at snatches of time was he able to cultivate the faculty of which the society of Coleridge had made him imperfectly conscious.

Lamb's first compositions were in verse—produced slowly, at long intervals,—and with self-distrust which the encouragements of Coleridge could not subdue. With the exception of a sonnet to Mrs. Siddons, whose acting, especially in the character of Lady Randolph, had made a deep impression upon him, they were exclusively personal. The longest and most elaborate is that beautiful piece of blank verse entitled “The Grandame,” in which he so affectionately celebrates the virtues of the “antique world” of the aged housekeeper of Mr. Plumer. A youthful passion, which lasted only a few months, and which he afterwards attempted to regard lightly as a folly past, inspired a few sonnets of very delicate feeling and exquisite music. On the death of his



parents, he felt himself called upon by duty to repay to his sister the solicitude with which she had watched over his infancy;—and well indeed he performed it! To her, from the age of twenty-one, he devoted his existence;—seeking thenceforth no connection which could interfere with her supremacy in his affections, or impair his ability to sustain and to comfort her.



## CHAPTER II.

[1796.]

## LETTERS TO COLERIDGE.

IN the year 1796, Coleridge, having married, and relinquished his splendid dream of emigration, was resident at Bristol; and Lamb, who had quitted the Temple, and lived with his father, then sinking into dotage, felt his absence from London bitterly, and sought a correspondence with him as, almost, his only comfort. “In your absence,” he writes, in one of the earliest of his letters,\* “I feel a stupor which makes me indifferent to the hopes and fears of this life. I sometimes wish to induce a religious turn of mind; but habits are stubborn

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\* These and other passages are extracted from letters which are either too personal or not sufficiently interesting for entire publication.



things, and my religious fervours are confined to some fleeting moments of occasional solitary devotion. A correspondence opening with you has roused me a little from my lethargy, and made me conscious of existence. Indulge me in it ! I will not be very troublesome." And again a few days after : " You are the only correspondent, and, I might add, the only friend I have in the world. I go nowhere, and have no acquaintance. Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society, and I am left alone. Coleridge, I devoutly wish that Fortune, which has made sport with you so long may play one prank more, throw you into London, or some spot near it, and there snugify you for life. 'Tis a selfish, but natural wish for me, cast on life's plain friendless." These appeals, it may well be believed, were not made in vain to one who delighted in the lavish communication of the riches of his own mind even to strangers ; but none of the letters of Coleridge to Lamb have been preserved. He had just published his " Religious Musings," and the glittering enthusiasm of its language excited Lamb's pious feelings, almost to a degree of pain. " I dare not," says he of this poem, " criticise it. I like not to select any part



where all is excellent. I can only admire and thank you for it, in the name of a lover of true poetry—

‘ Believe thou, O my soul,  
Life is a vision shadowy of truth ;  
And pain, and anguish, and the wormy grave,  
Shapes of a dream.’

I thank you for these lines, in the name of a Necessitarian.” To Priestley, Lamb repeatedly alludes as to the object of their common admiration. “ In reading your Religious Musings,” says he, “ I have felt a transient superiority over you : I *have* seen Priestley. I love to see his name repeated in your writings ;—I love and honour him almost profanely.”\* The same fervour glows in the sectarian piety of the following letter addressed to Coleridge, when fascinated with the idea of a cottage life.

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\* He probably refers to the following lines in the Religious Musings :—

So Priestley, their patriot, and saint, and sage,  
Him, full of years, from his lov'd native land,  
Statesmen blood-stained, and priests idolatrous,  
Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying, he return'd,  
And mused expectant on those promis'd years !



## TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ Coleridge, I feel myself much your debtor for that spirit of confidence and friendship which dictated your last letter. May your soul find peace at last in your cottage life ! I only wish you were *but* settled. Do continue to write to me. I read your letters with my sister, and they gave us both abundance of delight. Especially they please us two, when you talk in a religious strain,—not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism, more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy, than consistent with humility of genuine piety. To instance now in your last letter,—you say, ‘it is by the press, that God hath given finite spirits both evil and good (I suppose you mean *simply* bad men and good men), a portion as it were of His Omnipresence !’ Now, high as the human intellect comparatively will soar, and wide as its influence, malign or salutary, can extend, is there not, Coleridge, a distance between the Divine Mind and it, which makes such language blasphemy ? Again, in your first fine consolatory epistle you say, ‘you are a temporary sharer in human misery, that you may be an eternal par-



taker of the Divine Nature.' What more than this do those men say, who are for exalting the man Christ Jesus into the second person of an unknown Trinity, men, whom you or I scruple not to call idolators? Man, full of imperfections, at best, and subject to wants which momentarily remind him of dependence; man, a weak and ignorant being, 'servile' from his birth 'to all the skiey influences,' with eyes sometimes open to discern the right path, but a head generally too dizzy to pursue it; man, in the pride of speculation, forgetting his nature, and hailing in himself the future God, must make the angels laugh. Be not angry with me, Coleridge; I wish not to cavil; I know I cannot *instruct* you; I only wish to *re-mind* you of that humility which best becometh the Christian character. God, in the New Testament, (*our best guide*,) is represented to us in the kind, condescending, amiable, familiar light of a *parent*; and in my poor mind 'tis best for us so to consider of him, as our *heavenly* father, and our *best friend*, without indulging too bold conceptions of his nature. Let us learn to think humbly of ourselves, and rejoice in the appellation of 'dear children,' 'brethren,' and 'co-heirs with Christ of the promises,' seeking to know no further.



“I am not insensible, indeed I am not, of the value of that first letter of yours, and I shall find reason to thank you for it again and again long after that blemish in it is forgotten. It will be a fine lesson of comfort to us, whenever we read it; and read it we often shall, Mary and I.

“Accept our loves and best kind wishes for the welfare of yourself and wife and little one. Nor let me forget to wish you joy on your birth-day, so lately past; I thought you had been older. My kind thanks and remembrances to Lloyd.

“God love us all, and may he continue to be the father and the friend of the whole human race!

“C. LAMB.”

“Sunday Evening.”

The next letter, commencing in a similar strain, diverges to literary topics, and especially alludes to “Walton’s Angler,”—a book which Lamb always loved as it were a living friend.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“My dear friend, I am not ignorant that to be a partaker of the Divine Nature is a phrase to be met with in Scripture: I am only apprehensive, lest we in these latter days, tinctured (some of us



perhaps pretty deeply) with mystical notions and the pride of metaphysics, might be apt to affix to such phrases a meaning, which the primitive users of them, the simple fisher of Galilee for instance, never intended to convey. With that other part of your apology I am not quite so well satisfied. You seem to me to have been straining your comparing faculties to bring together things infinitely distant and unlike; the feeble narrow-sphered operations of the human intellect; and the every-where diffused mind of Deity, the peerless wisdom of Jehovah. Even the expression appears to me inaccurate—portion of omnipresence——omnipresence is an attribute whose very essence is entireness. How can omnipresence be affirmed of any thing in part? But enough of this spirit of disputaciousness. Let us attend to the proper business of human life, and talk a little together respecting our domestic concerns. Do you continue to make me acquainted with what you are doing, and how soon you are likely to be settled once for all.

“Have you seen Bowles’s new poem on ‘Hope?’ What character does it bear? Has he exhausted his stores of tender plaintiveness? or is he the same in this last as in all his former pieces?



The duties of the day call me off from this pleasant intercourse with my friend—so for the present adieu. Now for the truant borrowing of a few minutes from business. Have you met with a new poem called the ‘Pursuits of Literature?’ from the extracts in the ‘British Review’ I judge it to be a very humorous thing, in particular I remember what I thought a very happy character of Dr. Darwin’s poetry. Among all your quaint readings did you ever light upon ‘Walton’s Complete Angler’? I asked you the question once before; it breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity and simplicity of heart; there are many choice, old verses interspersed in it; it would sweeten a man’s temper at any time to read it; it would Christianise every discordant angry passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it.

“When will Southey be delivered of his new epic? Madoc I think is to be the name of it, though that is a name not familiar to my ears. What progress do you make in your hymns? What ‘Review’ are you connected with? if with any, why do you delay to notice White’s book? You are justly offended at its profaneness, but surely you have undervalued its *wit*, or you would have been more loud in its praises. Do not you



think that in Slender's death and madness there is most exquisite humour, mingled with tenderness, that is irresistible, truly Shakspearian? Be more full in your mention of it. Poor fellow, he has (very undeservedly) lost by it, nor do I see that it is likely ever to reimburse him the charge of printing, &c. Give it a lift, if you can. I am just now wondering whether you will ever come to town again, Coleridge; 'tis among the things I dare not hope, but can't help wishing. For myself, I can live in the midst of town luxury and superfluity, and not long for them, and I can't see why your children might not hereafter do the same. Remember, you are not in Arcadia, when you are in the west of England, and they may catch infection from the world without visiting the metropolis. But you seem to have set your heart upon this same cottage plan, and God prosper you in the experiment! I am at a loss for more to write about, so 'tis as well that I am arrived at the bottom of my paper.

“God love you, Coleridge—our best loves, and tenderest wishes await on you, your Sara, and your little one.

“C. L.”



Having been encouraged by Coleridge to entertain the thought of publishing his verses, he submitted the poem called "The Grandame," to his friend with the following letter:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Monday night.

"Unfurnished at present with any sheet-filling subject, I shall continue my letter gradually and journal-wise. My second thoughts entirely coincide with your thoughts on 'Joan of Arc,' and I can only wonder at my childish judgment which overlooked the 1st book and could prefer the 9th; not that I was insensible to the soberer beauties of the former, but the latter caught me with its glare of magic,—the former, however, left a more pleasing general recollection in my mind. Let me add, the 1st book was the favourite of my sister—and *I* now, with Joan, often 'think on Domremi and the fields of Arc.' I must not pass over without acknowledging my obligations to your full and satisfactory account of personifications. I have read it again and again, and it will be a guide to my future taste. Perhaps I had estimated Southey's merits too much by number, weight, and measure.



I now agree completely and entirely in your opinion of the genius of Southey. Your own image of melancholy is illustrative of what you teach, and in itself masterly. I conjecture it is disbranched from one of your embryo 'hymns.' When they are mature for birth (were I you) I should print 'em in one separate volume, with 'Religious Musings,' and your part of the 'Joan of Arc.' Birds of the same soaring wing should hold on their flight in company. Once for all (and by renewing the subject you will only renew in me the condemnation of Tantalus), I hope to be able to pay you a visit (if you are then at Bristol) some time in the latter end of August or beginning of September, for a week or fortnight—before that time, office business puts an absolute veto on my coming. Of the blank verses I spoke of, the following lines are the only tolerably complete ones I have writ out of not more than one hundred and fifty. That I get on so slowly you may fairly impute to want of practice in composition, when I declare to you that (the few verses which you have seen excepted) I have not writ fifty lines since I left school. It may not be amiss to remark that my grandmother (on whom the verses are written) lived housekeeper in



a family the fifty or sixty last years of her life—that she was a woman of exemplary piety and goodness—and for many years before her death was terribly afflicted with a cancer in her breast, which she bore with true christian patience. You may think that I have not kept enough apart the ideas of her heavenly and her earthly master, but recollect I have designedly given in to her own way of feeling—and if she had a failing 'twas that she respected her master's family too much, not revered her Maker too little. The lines begin imperfectly, as I may probably connect 'em if I finish at all, — and if I do Biggs shall print 'em, in a more economical way than you yours, for (sonnets and all) they won't make a thousand lines as I propose completing 'em, and the substance must be wire-drawn.

The following letter, written at intervals, will give an insight into Lamb's spirit at this time, in its lighter and gayer moods. It would seem that his acquaintance with the old English dramatists had just commenced with Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger:—



TO MR. COLERIDGE.

" Tuesday evening.

" To your list of illustrative personifications, into which a fine imagination enters, I will take leave to add the following from Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Wife for a Month;' 'tis the conclusion of a description of a sea fight:—'The game of *death* was never play'd so nobly; the meagre thief grew wanton in his mischiefs, and his shrunk hollow eyes smiled on his ruins.' There is fancy in these of a lower order, from 'Bonduca:—' Then did I see these valiant men of Britain, like boding owls creep into tods of ivy, and hoot their fears to one another nightly.' Not that it is a personification; only it just caught my eye in a little extract book I keep, which is full of quotations from B. and F. in particular, in which authors I can't help thinking there is a greater richness of poetical fancy than in any one, Shakspeare excepted. Are you acquainted with Massinger? At an hazard I will trouble you with a passage from a play of his called 'A Very Woman.' The lines are spoken by a lover (disguised) to his faithless mistress. You will remark the fine effect of the double endings. You will by your ear distinguish the



lines, for I write 'em as prose. ' Not far from where my father lives, *a lady*, a neighbour by, blest with as great a *beauty* as nature durst bestow without *undoing*, dwelt, and most happily, as I thought then, and blest the house a thousand times she *dwelt* in. This beauty, in the blossom of my youth, when my first fire knew no adulterate *incense*, nor I no way to flatter but my *fondness*; in all the bravery my friends could *show me*, in all the faith my innocence could *give me*, in the best language my true tongue could *tell me*, and all the broken sighs my sick heart *lend me*, I sued and serv'd; long did I serve this *lady*, long was my travail, long my trade to *win her*; with all the duty of my soul I SERV'D HER.' ' Then she must love.' ' She did, but never me: she could not *love me*; she would not love, she hated,—more, she *scorn'd me*; and in so poor and base a way *abused me* for all my services, for all my *bounties*, so bold neglects flung on me.'—' What out of love, and worthy love, I *gave her*, (shame to her most unworthy mind,) to fools, to girls, to fiddlers and her boys she flung, all in disdain of me.' One more passage strikes my eye from B. and F.'s ' Palamon and Arcite.' One of 'em complains in prison: ' This is all our world; we shall know nothing here but



one another; hear nothing but the clock that tells us our woes; the vine shall grow, but we shall never see it,' &c.—Is not the last circumstance exquisite? I mean not to lay myself open by saying they exceed Milton, and perhaps Collins, in sublimity. But don't you conceive all poets after Shakspeare yield to 'em in variety of genius? Massinger treads close on their heels: but you are most probably as well acquainted with his writings as your humble servant. My quotations, in that case, will only serve to expose my barrenness of matter. Southey, in simplicity and tenderness, is excelled decidedly only, I think, by Beaumont and F. in his 'Maid's Tragedy,' and some parts of 'Philaster' in particular; and elsewhere occasionally: and perhaps by Cowper in his 'Crazy Kate,' and in parts of his translation; such as the speeches of Hecuba and Andromache. I long to know your opinion of that translation. The Odyssey especially is surely very homeric. What nobler than the appearance of Phœbus at the beginning of the Iliad—the lines ending with 'Dread sounding, bounding on the silver bow!'

"I beg you will give me your opinion of the translation; it afforded me high pleasure. As cu-



rious a specimen of translation as ever fell into my hands, is a young man's in our office, of a French novel. What in the original was literally 'amiable delusions of the fancy,' he proposed to render 'the fair frauds of the imagination.' I had much trouble in licking the book into any meaning at all. Yet did the knave clear fifty or sixty pounds by subscription and selling the copyright. The book itself not a week's work! To-day's portion of my journalizing epistle has been very dull and poverty-stricken. I will here end."

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"Tuesday night.

"I have been drinking egg hot and smoking Oronooko, (associated circumstances, which ever forcibly recall to my mind our evenings and nights at the Salutation,) my eyes and brain are heavy and asleep, but my heart is awake; and if words came as ready as ideas, and ideas as feelings, I could say ten hundred kind things. Coleridge, you know not my supreme happiness at having one on earth (though counties separate us) whom I can call a friend. Remember you those tender lines of Logan?—

'Our broken friendships we deplore,  
And loves of youth that are no more ;



No after friendships e'er can raise  
Th' endearments of our early days,  
And ne'er the heart such fondness prove,  
As when we first began to love.'

" I am writing at random, and half-tipsy, what you may not *equally* understand, as you will be sober when you read it, but *my* sober and *my* half-tipsy hours you are alike a sharer in. Good night.

' Then up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink,  
Craigdoroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink.'—BURNS."

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" Thursday.

" I am now in high hopes to be able to visit you, if perfectly convenient on your part, by the end of next month—perhaps the last week or fortnight in July. A change of scene and a change of faces would do me good, even if that scene were not to be Bristol, and those faces Coleridge's and his friends'! In the words of Terence, a little altered, 'Tædet me hujus quotidiani *mundi*.' I am heartily sick of the every-day scenes of life. I shall half wish you unmarried (don't show this to Mrs. C.) for one evening only, to have the pleasure of smoking with you, and drinking egg hot in



some little smoky room in a pot-house, for I know not yet how I shall like you in a decent room, and looking quite happy. My best love and respects to Sara notwithstanding.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ CHARLES LAMB.”

A proposal by Coleridge to print Lamb's poems with a new edition of his own (an association in which Lloyd was ultimately included) occasioned reciprocal communications of each other's verses, and many questions of small alterations suggested and argued on both sides. I have thought it better to omit much of this verbal criticism, which, not very interesting in itself, is unintelligible without a cotemporary reference to the poems which are its subject. The next letter was written on hearing of Coleridge being afflicted with a painful disease.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ My brother, my friend,—I am distress for you, believe me I am; not so much for your painful, troublesome complaint, which, I trust, is only for a time, as for those anxieties which brought it on, and perhaps even now may be nursing its malig-



nity. Tell me, dearest of my friends, is your mind at peace, or has any thing, yet unknown to me, happened to give you fresh disquiet, and steal from you all the pleasant dreams of future rest? Are you still (I fear you are) far from being comfortably settled? Would to God it were in my power to contribute towards the bringing of you into the haven where you would be. But you are too well skilled in the philosophy of consolation to need my humble tribute of advice; in pain, and in sickness, and in all manner of disappointments, I trust you have that within you which shall speak peace to your mind. Make it, I entreat you, one of your puny comforts, that I feel for you, and share all your griefs with you. I feel as if I were troubling you about *little* things; now I am going to resume the subject of our last two letters, but it may divert us both from unpleasanter feelings to make such matters, in a manner, of importance. Without further apology, then, it was not that I did not relish, that I did not in my heart thank you for those little pictures of your feelings which you lately sent me, if I neglected to mention them. You may remember you had said much the same things before to me on the same subject in a former letter, and I considered those last verses as



only the identical thoughts better clothed; either way (in prose or verse) such poetry must be welcome to me. I love them as I love the Confessions of Rousseau, and for the same reason; the same frankness, the same openness of heart, the same disclosure of all the most hidden and delicate affections of the mind: they make me proud to be thus esteemed worthy of the place of friend-confessor, brother-confessor, to a man like Coleridge. This last is, I acknowledge, language too high for friendship; but it is also, I declare, too sincere for flattery. Now, to put on stilts, and talk magnificently about trifles. I condescend, then, to your counsel, Coleridge, and allow my first sonnet (sick to death am I to make mention of my sonnets, and I blush to be so taken up with them, indeed I do); I allow it to run thus, '*Fairy Land*,' &c. &c., as I last wrote it.

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“The fragments I now send you, I want printed to get rid of 'em; for, while they stick burr-like to my memory, they tempt me to go on with the idle trade of versifying, which I long, most sincerely I speak it, I long to leave off, for it is unprofitable to my soul; I feel it is; and these questions



about words, and debates about alterations, take me off, I am conscious, from the properer business of *my* life. Take my sonnets, once for all, and do not propose any re-amendments, or mention them again in any shape to me, I charge you. I blush that my mind can consider them as things of any worth. And, pray, admit or reject these fragments as you like or dislike them, without ceremony. Call 'em sketches, fragments, or what you will, and do not entitle any of my *things* love sonnets, as I told you to call 'em; 'twill only make me look little in my own eyes; for it is a passion of which I retain *nothing*: 'twas a weakness, concerning which I may say, in the words of Petrarch (whose life is now open before me) 'if it drew me out of some vices, it also prevented the growth of many virtues, filling me with the love of the creature rather than the Creator, which is the death of the soul.' Thank God, the folly has left me for ever; not even a review of my love verses renews one wayward wish in me; and if I am at all solicitous to trim 'em out in their best apparel, it is because they are to make their appearance in good company. Now to my fragments. Lest you have lost my Grandam, she shall be one. 'Tis among the



few verses I ever wrote, that to Mary is another, which profit me in the recollection. God love her; may we two never love each other less!

“These, Coleridge, are the few sketches I have thought worth preserving; how will they relish thus detached? Will you reject all or any of them? They are thine, do whatsoever thou listeth with them. My eyes ache with writing long and late, and I wax wondrous sleepy; God bless you and yours, me and mine. Good night.

“C. LAMB.

“I will keep my eyes open reluctantly a minute longer to tell you, that I love you for those simple, tender, heart-flowing lines with which you conclude your last, and in my eye best, sonnet (so you call 'em), ‘So, for the mother's sake, the child was dear, and dearer was the mother for the child.’ Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge, or rather, I should say, banish elaborateness; for simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart, and carries into day-light with it its own modest buds, and genuine, sweet, and clear flowers of expression. I allow no hot beds in the garden of Parnassus. I am unwilling to go to bed, and leave my sheet unfilled (a good piece of night work for an idle body like me), so will finish with begging you to



send me the earliest account of your complaint, its progress, or (as I hope to God you will be able to send me) the tale of your recovery, or at least amendment. My tenderest remembrances to your Sara.—

“Once more good night.”

A wish to dedicate his portion of the volume to his sister gave occasion to the following touching letter :

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“Coleridge, I love you for dedicating your poetry to Bowles: Genius of the sacred fountain of tears, it was he who led you gently by the hand thro’ all this valley of weeping, shew’d you the dark green yew trees, and the willow shades, where, by the fall of waters, you might indulge an uncomplaining melancholy, a delicious regret for the past, or weave fine visions of that awful future, ‘when all the vanities of life’s brief day oblivion’s hurrying hand hath swept away, and all its sorrows at the awful blast of the archangel’s trump are but as shadows past.’ I have another sort of dedication in my head for my few things, which I want to know if you approve of, and can insert. I mean to inscribe them to my sister. It will be



unexpected, and it will give her pleasure ; or do you think it will look whimsical at all ? as I have not spoke to her about it, I can easily reject the idea. But there is a monotony in the affections, which people living together, or, as we do now, very frequently seeing each other, are apt to give into ; a sort of indifference in the expression of kindness for each other, which demands that we should sometimes call to our aid the trickery of surprise. Do you publish with Lloyd, or without him ? in either case my little portion may come last, and after the fashion of orders to a country correspondent, I will give directions how I should like to have 'em done. The title page to stand thus :—

## POEMS,

BY

CHARLES LAMB, OF THE INDIA-HOUSE.

“ Under this title the following motto, which, for want of room, I put over leaf, and desire you to insert, whether you like it or no. May not a gentleman chuse what arms, mottoes, or armorial bearings the herald will give him leave, without consulting his republican friend, who might advise



none? May not a publican put up the sign of the Saracen's Head, even though his undiscerning neighbour should prefer, as more genteel, the Cat and Gridiron?

' This beauty, in the blossom of my youth,  
When my first fire knew no adult'rate incense,  
Nor I no way to flatter but my fondness,  
In the best language my true tongue could tell me,  
And all the broken sighs my sick heart lend me,  
I sued and serv'd. Long did I love this lady.'—*Massinger*.

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THE DEDICATION.

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THE FEW FOLLOWING POEMS,  
CREATURES OF THE FANCY AND THE FEELING  
IN LIFE'S MORE VACANT HOURS,  
PRODUCED, FOR THE MOST PART, BY  
LOVE IN IDLENESS,  
ARE,  
WITH ALL A BROTHER'S FONDNESS,  
INSCRIBED TO  
MARY ANNE LAMB,  
THE  
AUTHOR'S BEST FRIEND AND SISTER.



“ This is the pomp and paraphernalia of parting, with which I take my leave of a passion which has reigned so royally (so long) within me ; thus, with its trappings of leaureatship, I fling it off, pleased and satisfied with myself that the weakness troubles me no longer. I am wedded, Coleridge, to the fortunes of my sister and my poor old father. O ! my friend, I think sometimes could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose ? not those ‘ merrier days,’ not the ‘ pleasant days of hope,’ not ‘ those wanderings with a fair hair’d maid,’ which I have so often and so feelingly regretted, but the days, Coleridge, of a *mother’s* fondness for her *school-boy*. What would I give to call her back to earth for *one* day, on my knees to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper which, from time to time, have given her gentle spirit pain ; and the day, my friend, I trust, will come, there will be ‘ time enough’ for kind offices of love, if ‘ Heaven’s eternal year’ be ours. Hereafter, her meek spirit shall not reproach me. O, my friend, cultivate the filial feelings ! and let no man think himself released from the kind ‘ charities’ of relationship ; these shall give him peace at the last ; these are the best foundation for every species of benevo-



lence. I rejoice to hear, by certain channels, that you, my friend, are reconciled with all your relations. 'Tis the most kindly and natural species of love, and we have all the associated train of early feelings to secure its strength and perpetuity. Send me an account of your health; *indeed* I am solicitous about you. God love you and yours.

“C. LAMB.”

The following, written about this time, alludes to some desponding expression in a letter which is lost, and which Coleridge had combated.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“I had put my letter into the post rather hastily, not expecting to have to acknowledge another from you so soon. This morning's present has made me alive again: my last night's epistle was childishly querulous; but you have put a little life into me, and I will thank you for your remembrance of me, while my sense of it is yet warm; for if I linger a day or two I may use the same phrase of acknowledgment, or similar, but the feeling that dictates it now will be gone. I shall send you a *caput mortuum*, not a *cor vivens*. Thy Watchman's, thy bellman's verses I do retort upon thee, thou libel-



lous varlet,—why you cried the hours yourself, and who made you so proud ! But I submit, to show my humility, most implicitly to your dogmas. I reject entirely the copy of verses you reject. With regard to my leaving off versifying you have said so many pretty things, so many fine compliments, ingeniously decked out in the garb of sincerity, and undoubtedly springing from a present feeling somewhat like sincerity, that you might melt the most un-muse-ical soul,—did you not (now for a Rowland compliment for your profusion of *Olivers*), did you not in your very epistle, by the many pretty fancies and profusion of heart displayed in it, dissuade and discourage me from attempting anything after you. At present I have not leisure to make verses, nor anything approaching to a fondness for the exercise. In the ignorant present time, who can answer for the future man ? ‘At lovers’ perjuries Jove laughs’—and poets have sometimes a disingenuous way of forswearing their occupation. This though is not my case. Publish your *Burns* when and how you like, it will be new to me,—my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. *Burns* was the god of my idolatry, as *Bowles* of yours. I am jealous of



your fraternizing with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns, or my old favourite, Cowper. But you conciliate matters when you talk of the 'divine chit-chat' of the latter: by the expression, I see you thoroughly relish him. I love Mrs. Coleridge for her excuses an hundred fold more dearly, than if she heaped 'line upon line,' out Hannah-ing Hannah More; and had rather hear you sing 'Did a very little baby' by your family fire-side, than listen to you, when you were repeating one of Bowles' sweetest sonnets, in your sweet manner, while we two were indulging sympathy, a solitary luxury, by the fire-side at the Salutation. Yet have I no higher ideas of heaven. Your company was one 'cordial in this melancholy vale'—the remembrance of it is a blessing partly, and partly a curse. When I can abstract myself from things present, I can enjoy it with a freshness of relish; but it more constantly operates to an unfavourable comparison with the uninteresting converse I always and *only* can partake in. Not a soul loves Bowles here: scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament,—they talk a language I understand not, I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter, and with



the dead in their books. My sister, indeed, is all I can wish in a companion; but our spirits are alike poorly, our reading and knowledge from the self-same sources; our communication with the scenes of the world alike narrow; never having kept separate company, or any 'company' *together*—never having read separate books, and few books *together*—what knowledge have we to convey to each other? In our little range of duties and connections, how few sentiments can take place, without friends, with few books, with a taste for religion, rather than a strong religious habit! We need some support, some leading-strings to cheer and direct us; you talk very wisely, and be not sparing of *your advice*. Continue to remember us, and to show us you do remember us: we will take as lively an interest in what concerns you and yours. All I can add to your happiness, will be sympathy: you can add to mine *more*; you can teach me wisdom. I am indeed an unreasonable correspondent; but I was unwilling to let my last night's letter go off without this qualifier: you will perceive by this my mind is easier, and you will rejoice. I do not expect or wish you to write, till you are moved; and, of course, shall not, till you announce to me that event, think of writing my-



self. Love to Mrs. Coleridge and David Hartley, and my kind remembrance to Lloyd if he is with you.

“ C. LAMB.

“ I will get ‘ Nature and Art,’—have not seen it yet: nor any of Jeremy Taylor’s works.”



## CHAPTER III.

[1797.]

## LETTERS TO COLERIDGE.

THE volume which was to combine the early poetry of the three friends was not completed in the year 1796, and proceeded slowly through the press in the following year; Lamb occasionally submitting an additional sonnet or correction of one already sent to the judgment of Coleridge, and filling long letters with minute suggestions on Coleridge's share of the work, and high, but honest expressions of praise of particular images and thoughts. The eulogy is only interesting as indicative of the reverential feeling with which Lamb regarded the genius of Coleridge;—but one or two specimens of the gentle rebuke which he ventured on, when the gorgeousness of Coleridge's language seemed to oppress his sense, are worthy of preservation. The



following relates to a line in the noble Ode on the Departing in Year, in which Coleridge had written of

‘Th’ ethereal multitude,  
Whose purple locks with snow-white glories shone.’

“ ‘Purple locks, and snow-white glories!’—these are things the muse talks about when, to borrow H. Walpole’s witty phrase, she is not finely frenzied, only a little lightheaded, that’s all—‘Purple locks!’ They may manage those things differently in fairy land; but your ‘golden tresses’ are to my fancy.”

On this remonstrance Coleridge changed the “purple” into “golden,” defending his original epithet; and Lamb thus gave up the point:—

“ ‘Golden locks, and snow-white glories’ are as incongruous as your former; and if the great Italian painters, of whom my friend knows about as much as the man in the moon, if these great gentlemen be on your side, I see no harm in your retaining the purple. The glories that *I* have observed to encircle the heads of saints and madonnas in those old paintings, have been mostly of a dirty drab-coloured yellow—a dull gambogian. Keep your old line; it will excite a confused kind of pleasurable idea in the reader’s mind, not clear



enough to be called a conception, nor just enough, I think, to reduce to painting. It is a rich line you say ; and riches hide a many faults." And the word "wreathed" was ultimately adopted instead of purple or golden : but the snow-white glories remain.

Not satisfied with the dedication of his portion of the volume to his sister, and the sonnet which had been sent to the press, Lamb urged on Coleridge the insertion of another, which seems to have been ultimately withheld as too poor in poetical merit for publication. The rejected sonnet, and the references made to it by the writer, have an interest now beyond what mere fancy can give. After various critical remarks on an ode of Coleridge, he thus introduced the subject:—

" If the fraternal sentiment conveyed in the following lines, will atone for the total want of anything like merit or genius in it, I desire you will print it next after my sonnet to my sister.

Friend of my earliest years and childish days,  
My joys, my sorrows, thou with me hast shared,  
Companion dear ; and we alike have fared,  
Poor pilgrims we, through life's unequal ways.



It were unwisely done, should we refuse  
To cheer our path, as featly as we may,  
Our lonely path to cheer, as travellers use,  
With merry song, quaint tale, or roundelay.  
And we will sometimes talk past troubles o'er,  
Of mercies shown, and all our sickness heal'd,  
And in his judgments God rememb'ring love :  
And we will learn to praise God evermore,  
For those 'glad tidings of great joy,' revealed  
By that sooth messenger, sent from above.

1797.

“ This has been a sad long letter of business, with no room in it for what honest Bunyan terms heart-work. I have just room left to congratulate you on your removal to Stowey ; to wish success to all your projects ; to ‘ bid fair peace ’ be to that house : to send my love and best wishes, breathed warmly, after your dear Sara, and her little David Hartley. If Lloyd be with you, bid him write to me : I feel to whom I am obliged primarily, for two very friendly letters I have received already from him. A dainty sweet book that ‘ Nature and Art ’ is.—I am at present re-re-reading Priestley’s Examination of the Scotch Doctors : how the rogue strings ’em up ! three together. You have no doubt read that clear, strong, humorous, most entertaining piece of reasoning ? If not, procure it, and be exquisitely amused. I wish I could get more of Priestley’s works. Can you



recommend me to any more books, easy of access, such as circulating shops afford? God bless you and yours.

“Monday morning, at office.

“Poor Mary is very unwell with a sore throat, and a slight species of scarlet fever. God bless her too.”

He recurs to the subject in his next letter, which is also interesting, as urging Coleridge to attempt some great poem worthy of his genius.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“I need not repeat my wishes to have my little sonnets printed *verbatim* my last way. In particular, I fear lest you should prefer printing my first sonnet, as you have done more than once, ‘did the wand of Merlin wave,’ it looks so like Mr. Merlin, the ingenious successor of the immortal Merlin, now living in good health and spirits, and flourishing in magical reputation, in Oxford-street; and, on my life, one half who read it would understand it so. Do put ’em forth finally, as I have, in various letters, settled it; for first a



man's self is to be pleased, and then his friends,—and, of course, the greater number of his friends, if they differ *inter se*. Thus taste may safely be put to the vote. I do long to see our names together; not for vanity's sake, and naughty pride of heart altogether, for not a living soul I know, or am intimate with, will scarce read the book,—so I shall gain nothing, *quoad famam*; and yet there is a little vanity mixes in it, I cannot help denying.—I am aware of the unpoetical cast of the six last lines of my last sonnet, and think myself unwarranted in smuggling so tame a thing into the book; only the sentiments of those six lines are thoroughly congenial to me in my state of mind, and I wish to accumulate perpetuating tokens of my affection to poor Mary,—that it has no originality in its cast, nor any thing in the feelings, but what is common and natural to thousands, nor ought properly to be called poetry, I see; still it will tend to keep present to my mind a view of things which I ought to indulge. These six lines, too, have not, to a reader, a connectedness with the foregoing. Omit it if you like.—What a treasure it is to my poor, indolent, and unemployed mind, thus to lay hold on a subject to talk about, though



'tis but a sonnet, and that of the lowest order! How mournfully inactive I am!—'Tis night: good night.

“ My sister, I thank God, is nigh recovered: she was seriously ill. Do, in your next letter, and that right soon, give me some satisfaction respecting your present situation at Stowey. Is it a farm you have got? and what does your worship know about farming?

“ Coleridge, I want you to write an epic poem. Nothing short of it can satisfy the vast capacity of true poetic genius. Having one great end to direct all your poetical faculties to, and on which to lay out your hopes, your ambition will show you to what you are equal. By the sacred energies of Milton! by the dainty, sweet, and soothing phantasies of honey-tongued Spenser! I adjure you to attempt the epic. Or do something, more ample than the writing an occasional brief ode or sonnet; something ‘to make yourself for ever known,—to make the age to come your own.’ But I prate; doubtless you meditate something. When you are exalted among the lords of epic fame, I shall recall with pleasure, and exultingly, the days of your humility, when you disdained not to put forth, in the same volume with mine, your ‘Religious Musings,’



and that other poem from the 'Joan of Arc,' those promising first-fruits of high renown to come. You have learning, you have fancy, you have enthusiasm, you have strength, and amplitude of wing enow for flights like those I recommend. In the vast and unexplored regions of fairy-land, there is ground enough unfound and uncultivated; search these, and realise your favourite Susquehannah scheme. In all our comparisons of taste, I do not know whether I have ever heard your opinion of a poet, very dear to me,—the now-out-of-fashion Cowley. Favour me with your judgment of him, and tell me if his prose essays, in particular, as well as no inconsiderable part of his verse, be not delicious. I prefer the graceful rambling of his essays, even to the courtly elegance and ease of Addison; abstracting from this the latter's exquisite humour.

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“When the little volume is printed, send me three or four, at all events not more than six copies, and tell me if I put you to any additional expense, by printing with you. I have no thought of the kind, and in that case must reimburse you.”

In the commencement of this year, Coleridge removed from Bristol to a cottage at Nether Stowey,



to embody his favourite dream of a cottage life. This change of place probably delayed the printing of the volume ; and Coleridge, busy with a thousand speculations, became irregular in replying to the letters with writing which Lamb solaced his dreary hours. The following are the most interesting portions of the only letters which remain of this year.

## TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ Priestley, whom I sin in almost adoring, speaks of ‘ such a choice of company, as tends to keep up that right bent, and firmness of mind, which a necessary intercourse with the world would otherwise warp and relax.’ ‘ Such fellowship is the true balsam of life ; its cement is infinitely more durable than that of the friendships of the world, and it looks for its proper fruit, and complete gratification, to the life beyond the grave.’ Is there a possible chance for such an one as I to realize in this world, such friendships ? Where am I to look for ’em ? What testimonials shall I bring of my being worthy of such friendship ? Alas ! the great and good go together in separate herds, and leave such as I to lag far far behind in all intellectual, and far more grievous to say, in all moral



accomplishments. Coleridge, I have not one truly elevated character among my acquaintance: not one Christian: not one, but undervalues Christianity—singly what am I to do? Wesley (have you read his life?) was he not an elevated character? Wesley has said, ‘Religion is not a solitary thing.’ Alas! it necessarily is so with me, or next to solitary. ’Tis true you write to me. But correspondence by letter, and personal intimacy, are very widely different. Do, do write to me, and do some good to my mind, already how much ‘warped and relaxed’ by the world! ’Tis the conclusion of another evening. Good night. God have us all in his keeping.

“If you are sufficiently at leisure, oblige me with an account of your plan of life at Stowey—your literary occupations and prospects—in short make me acquainted with every circumstance, which, as relating to you, can be interesting to me. Are you yet a Berkleyan? Make me one. I rejoice in being, speculatively, a necessitarian. Would to God, I were habitually a practical one. Confirm me in the faith of that great and glorious doctrine, and keep me steady in the contemplation of it. You some time since expressed an intention you had of finishing some extensive work on



the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. Have you let that intention go? Or are you doing anything towards it? Make to yourself other ten talents. My letter is full of nothingness. I talk of nothing. But I must talk. I love to write to you. I take a pride in it. It makes me think less meanly of myself. It makes me think myself not totally disconnected from the better part of mankind. I know I am too dissatisfied with the beings around me; but I cannot help occasionally exclaiming, 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar.' I know I am in noways better in practice than my neighbours, but I have a taste for religion, an occasional earnest aspiration after perfection, which they have not. I gain nothing by being with such as myself—we encourage one another in mediocrity. I am always longing to be with men more excellent than myself. All this must sound odd to you, but these are my predominant feelings, when I sit down to write to you, and I should put force upon my mind, were I to reject them. Yet I rejoice, and feel my privilege with gratitude, when I have been reading some wise book, such as I have just been reading, 'Priestley on Philosophical Ne-



cessity,' in the thought that I enjoy a kind of communion, a kind of friendship even with the great and good. Books are to me instead of friends. I wish they did not resemble the latter in their scarceness.

“ And how does little David Hartley? ‘*Ecquid in antiquam virtutem?*’ Does his mighty name work wonders yet upon his little frame and opening mind? I did not distinctly understand you—you don’t mean to make an actual ploughman of him? Is Lloyd with you yet? Are you intimate with Southey? What poems is he about to publish—he hath a most prolific brain, and is indeed a most sweet poet. But how can you answer all the various mass of interrogation I have put to you in the course of the sheet? Write back just what you like, only write something, however brief. I have now nigh finished my page, and got to the end of another evening (Monday evening), and my eyes are heavy and sleepy, and my brain unsuggestive. I have just heart enough awake to say good night once more, and God love you my dear friend, God love us all. Mary bears an affectionate remembrance of you.

“ CHARLES LAMB.”



A poem of Coleridge, emulous of Southey's "Joan of Arc," which he proposed to call the "Maid of Orleans," on which Lamb had made some critical remarks, produced the humorous recantation with which the following letter opens.

## TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Your poem is altogether admirable—parts of it are even exquisite. I perceived all its excellencies, on a first reading, as readily as now you have been removing a supposed film from my eyes. I was only struck with a certain faulty disproportion, in the matter and the *style*, which I still think I perceive, between these lines and the former ones. I had an end in view, I wished to make you reject the poem, only as being discordant with the other, and, in subserviance to that end, it was politically done in me to over-pass, and make no mention of merit, which, could you think me capable of *over-looking*, might reasonably damn for ever in your judgment all pretensions, in me, to be critical. There—I will be judged by Lloyd, whether I have not made a very handsome recantation. I was in the case of a man, whose friend has asked him his opinion of a certain young lady—the deluded



wight gives judgment against her *in toto*—don't like her face, her walk, her manners; finds fault with her eyebrows; can see no wit in her; his friend looks blank, he begins to smell a rat—wind veers about—he acknowledges her good sense, her judgment in dress, a certain simplicity of manners and honesty of heart, something too in her manners which gains upon you after a short acquaintance,—and then her accurate pronunciation of the French language, and a pretty uncultivated taste in drawing. The reconciled gentleman smiles applause, squeezes him by the hand, and hopes he will do him the honour of taking a bit of dinner with Mrs. — and him,—a plain family dinner,—some day next week; ‘for, I suppose, you never heard we were married. I'm glad to see you like my wife, however; you'll come and see her, ha?’ Now, am I too proud to retract entirely? Yet I do perceive I am in some sort straitened; you are manifestly wedded to this poem, and what fancy has joined let no man separate. I turn me to the Joan of Arc, second book.

“The solemn openings of it are with sounds, which Ll. would say ‘are silence to the mind.’ The deep preluding strains are fitted to initiate the mind, with a pleasing awe, into the sublimest mys-



teries of theory concerning man's nature, and his noblest destination—the philosophy of a first cause—of subordinate agents in creation, superior to man—the subserviency of Pagan worship, and Pagan faith to the introduction of a purer and more perfect religion, which you so elegantly describe as winning, with gradual steps her difficult way northward from Bethabrah. After all this cometh Joan, a *publican's* daughter, sitting on an ale-house bench, and marking the *swingings* of the *sign-board*, finding a poor man, his wife and six children, starved to death with cold, and thence roused into a state of mind proper to receive visions, emblematical of equality; which, what the devil Joan had to do with, I don't know, or, indeed, with the French and American revolutions, though that needs no pardon, it is executed so nobly. After all, if you perceive no disproportion, all argument is vain: I do not so much object to parts. Again, when you talk of building your fame on these lines in preference to the 'Religious Musings,' I cannot help conceiving of you, and of the author of that, as two different persons, and I think you a very vain man.

“ I have been re-reading your letter; much of it I *could* dispute, but with the latter part of it in



which you compare the two Joans, with respect to their predispositions for fanaticism I, *toto corde*, coincide with, only I think that Southey's strength rather lies in the description of the emotions of the Maid under the weight of inspiration,—these (I see no mighty difference between *her* describing them or *you* describing them), these if you only equal, the previous admirers of his poem, as is natural, will prefer his,—if you surpass, prejudice will scarcely allow it, and I scarce think you will surpass, though your specimen at the conclusion, I am in earnest, I think very nigh equals them. And in an account of a fanatic or of a prophet, the description of her *emotions* is expected to be most highly finished. By the way, I spoke far too disparagingly of your lines, and, I am ashamed to say, purposely. I should like you to specify or particularize; the story of the 'Tottering Eld,' of 'his eventful years all come and gone,' is too general; why not make him a soldier, or some character, however, in which he has been witness to frequency of 'cruel wrong and strange distress'? I think I should. When I laughed at the 'miserable man crawling from beneath the coverture,' I wonder I did not perceive that it was a laugh of horror—such as I have laughed at Dante's picture



of the famished Ugolino. Without falsehood, I perceive an hundred beauties in your narrative. Yet I wonder you do not perceive something out-of-the-way, something unsimple and artificial in the expression 'voiced a sad tale.' I hate made-dishes at the muses' banquet. I believe I was wrong in most of my other objections. But surely 'hailed him immortal,' adds nothing to the terror of the man's death, which it was your business to heighten not diminish by a phrase, which takes away all terror from it. I like that line, 'They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death.' Indeed there is scarce a line I do not like. '*Turbid ecstasy*' is surely not so good as what you *had* written, 'troublous.' Turbid rather suits the muddy kind of inspiration which London porter confers. The versification is, throughout, to my ears unexceptionable, with no disparagement to the measure of the '*Religious Musings*,' which is exactly fitted to the thoughts.

"You were building your house on a rock, when you rested your fame on that poem. I can scarce bring myself to believe, that I am admitted to a familiar correspondence, and all the licence of friendship, with a man who writes blank verse like Milton. Now, this is delicate



flattery, *indirect* flattery. Go on with your 'Maid of Orleans,' and be content to be second to yourself. I shall become a convert to it, when 'tis finished."

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"This afternoon I attend the funeral of my poor old aunt, who died on Thursday. I own I am thankful that the good creature has ended all her days of suffering and infirmity. She was to me, the 'cherisher of infancy,' and one must fall on those occasions into reflections, which it would be commonplace to enumerate, concerning death, 'of chance and change, and fate and human life.' Good God, who could have foreseen all this but four months back! I had reckoned, in particular, on my aunt's living many years; she was a very hearty old woman. But she was a mere skeleton, before she died, looked more like a corpse that had lain weeks in the grave, than one fresh dead. 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun, but let a man live many days and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.' Coleridge, why are we to live on after all the strength and beauty of existence are gone, when all the life of life is fled, as Burns ex-



presses it? Tell Lloyd I have had thoughts of turning Quaker, have been reading, and, or am rather just beginning to read, a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn's 'No Cross, no Crown.' I like it immensely. Unluckily I went to one of his meetings, tell him, in St. John's-street, yesterday, and saw a man under all the agitations and workings of a fanatic, who believed himself under the influence of some 'inevitable presence.' This cured me of Quakerism; I love it in the books of Penn and Woolman, but I detest the vanity of a man thinking he speaks by the Spirit, when what he says an ordinary man might say without all that quaking and trembling. In the midst of his inspiration, and the effects of it were most noisy, was handed into the midst of the meeting a most terrible black-guard Wapping sailor; the poor man, I believe, had rather have been in the hottest part of an engagement, for the congregation of broad-brims, together with the ravings of the prophet, were too much for his gravity, though I saw even he had delicacy enough not to laugh out. And the inspired gentleman, though his manner was so supernatural, yet neither talked nor professed to talk any thing more than good sober sense, common



morality, with now and then a declaration of not speaking from himself. Among other things, looking back to his childhood and early youth, he told the meeting what a graceless young dog he had been, that in his youth he had a good share of wit: reader, if thou hadst seen the gentleman, thou wouldst have sworn that it must indeed have been many years ago, for his rueful physiognomy would have scared away the playful goddess from the meeting, where he presided, for ever. A wit! a wit! what could he mean? Lloyd, it minded me of Falkland in the Rivals, 'Am I full of wit and humour? No indeed you are not. Am I the life and soul of every company I come into? No, it cannot be said you are.' That hard-faced gentleman, a wit! Why Nature wrote on his fanatic forehead fifty years ago, 'Wit never comes, that comes to all.' I should be as scandalized at a *bon mot* issuing from his oracle-looking mouth, as to see Cato go down a country-dance. God love you all. You are very good to submit to be pleased with reading my nothings. 'Tis the privilege of friendship to talk nonsense, and to have nonsense respected.

"Yours ever,

"C. LAMB.

"Monday."



## TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ Your last letter was dated the 10th February ; in it you promised to write again the next day. At least, I did not expect so long, so unfriend-like a silence. There was a time, Col., when a remissness of this sort in a dear friend would have lain very heavy on my mind, but latterly I have been too familiar with neglect to feel much from the semblance of it. Yet, to suspect one’s self overlooked, and in the way to oblivion, is a feeling rather humbling ; perhaps, as tending to self-mortification, not unfavourable to the spiritual state. Still, as you meant to confer no benefit on the soul of your friend, you do not stand quite clear from the imputation of unkindliness (a word, by which I mean the diminutive of unkindness). And then David Hartley was unwell ; and how is the small philosopher, the minute philosopher ? and David’s mother ? Coleridge, I am not trifling, nor are these matter-of-fact questions only. You are all very dear and precious to me ; do what you will, Col., you may hurt me and vex me by your silence, but you cannot estrange my heart from you all. I cannot scatter friendships like chuck farthings, nor let them drop from mine hand like hour-glass-



sand. I have but two or three people in the world to whom I am more than indifferent, and I can't afford to whistle them off to the winds.

“My sister has recovered from her illness. May that merciful God make tender my heart, and make me as thankful, as in my distress I was earnest, in my prayers. Congratulate me on an ever present and never-alienable friend like her. And do, do insert, if you have not *lost*, my dedication. It will have lost half its value by coming so late. If you really are going on with that volume, I shall be enabled in a day or two to send you a short poem to insert. Now, do answer this. Friendship, and acts of friendship, should be reciprocal, and free as the air; a friend should never be reduced to beg an alms of his fellow. Yet I will beg an alms; I entreat you to write, and tell me all about poor L. L., and all of you.

“God love and preserve you all.

“C. LAMB.”

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TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“I stared with wild wonderment to see thy well-known hand again. It revived many a pleasing recollection of an epistolary intercourse, of late



strangely suspended, once the pride of my life. Before I even open'd thy letter, I figured to myself a sort of complacency which my little hoard at home would feel at receiving the new comer into the little drawer, where I keep my treasures of this kind. You have done well in writing to me. The little room (was it not a little one?) at the Salutation was already in the way of becoming a fading idea; it had begun to be classed in my memory with those 'wanderings with a fair hair'd maid,' in the recollection of which I feel I have no property. You press me, very kindly do you press me, to come to Stowey; obstacles, strong as death, prevent me at present; maybe I may be able to come before the year is out; believe me, I will come as soon as I can, but I dread naming a probable time. It depends on fifty things, besides the expense, which is not nothing. As to —, caprice may grant what caprice only refused, and it is no more hardship, rightly considered, to be dependent on him for pleasure, than to lie at the mercy of the rain and sunshine for the enjoyment of a holiday: in either case we are not to look for a suspension of the laws of nature. 'Grill will be grill.' Vide Spenser.

"I could not but smile at the compromise you



make with me for printing Lloyd's poems first, but there is in nature, I fear, too many tendencies to envy and jealousy not to justify you in your apology. Yet, if any one is welcome to pre-eminence from me, it is Lloyd, for he would be the last to desire it. So, pray, let his name *uniformly* precede mine, for it would be treating me like a child to suppose it could give me pain. Yet, alas! I am not insusceptible of the bad passions. Thank God, I have the ingenuousness to be ashamed of them. I am dearly fond of Charles Lloyd; he is all goodness, and I have too much of the world in my composition to feel myself thoroughly deserving of his friendship.

“Lloyd tells me that Sheridan put you upon writing your tragedy. I hope you are only Coleridgeizing when you talk of finishing it in a few days. Shakspeare was a more modest man, but you best know your own power.

“Of my last poem you speak slightly; surely the longer stanzas were pretty tolerable; at least there was one good line in it.

‘Thick-shaded trees, with dark green leaf rich clad.’

“To adopt your own expression, I call this a ‘rich’ line, a fine full line. And some others I



thought even beautiful. Believe me, my little gentleman will feel some repugnance at riding behind in the basket, tho', I confess, in pretty good company. Your picture of idiocy, with the sugar-loaf head, is exquisite; but are you not too severe upon our more favoured brethren in fatuity? I send you a trifling letter; but you have only to think that I have been skimming the superficies of my mind, and found it only froth. Now, do write again; you cannot believe how I long and love always to hear about you.

“Yours most affectionately,

“CHARLES LAMB.

“Monday night.”

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TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“Did you seize the grand opportunity of seeing Kosciusko while he was at Bristol? I never saw a hero, I wonder how they look. I have been reading a most curious romance-like work, called the Life of John Bunce, Esq. 'Tis very interesting, and an extraordinary compound of all manner of subjects, from the depth of the ludicrous to the heights of sublime religious truth. There is much



abstruse science in it above my cut, and an infinite fund of pleantry. John Bunce is a famous fine man, formed in nature's most eccentric hour. I am ashamed of what I write. But I have no topic to talk of. I see nobody; and sit, and read, or walk alone, and hear nothing. I am quite lost to conversation from disuse; and out of the sphere of my little family, who, I am thankful, are dearer and dearer to me every day, I see no face that brightens up at my approach. My friends are at a distance (meaning Birmingham and Stowey); worldly hopes are at a low ebb with me, and unworldly thoughts are not yet familiarized to me, tho' I occasionally indulge in them. Still I feel a calm not unlike content. I think it is sometimes more akin to physical stupidity than to an heaven-flowing serenity and peace. What right have I to obtrude all this upon you? and what is such a letter to you? and, if I come to Stowey, what conversation can I furnish to compensate my friend for those stores of knowledge and of fancy; those delightful treasures of wisdom, which, I know, he will open to me. But it is better to give than to receive; and I was a very patient hearer, and docile scholar, in our winter evening meetings at



Mr. May's; was I not, Col.? What I have owed to thee, my heart can ne'er forget.

"God love you and yours.

"C. L.

"Saturday."

At length the small volume containing the poems of Coleridge, Lloyd, and Lamb, was published by Mr. Cottle at Bristol. It excited little attention; but Lamb had the pleasure of seeing his dedication to his sister printed in good set form, after his own fashion, and of witnessing the delight and pride with which she received it. This little book, now very scarce, had the following motto expressive of Coleridge's feeling towards his associates:—*Duplex nobis vinculum, et amicitiae et similibus junctarumque Camænarum; quod utinam neque mors solvat, neque temporis longinquitas.* Lamb's share of the work consists of eight sonnets; four short fragments of blank verse, of which the Grandame is the principal; a poem, called the Tomb of Douglas; some verses to Charles Lloyd; and a Vision of Repentance; which are all published in the last edition of his poetical works, except one of the sonnets, which was addressed to Mrs. Siddons; and the Tomb of Douglas, which was justly omitted as common-



place and vapid. They only occupy twenty-eight duodecimo pages, within which space was comprised all that Lamb at this time had written which he deemed worth preserving.

The following letter from Lamb to Coleridge seems to have been written on receiving the first copy of the work.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“I am sorry I cannot now relish your poetical present so thoroughly as I feel it deserves ; but I do not the less thank Lloyd and you for it.

“Before I offer, what alone I have to offer, a few obvious remarks, on the poems you sent me, I can but notice the odd coincidence of two young men, in one age, carolling their grandmothers. Love, what L. calls the ‘feverish and romantic tie,’ hath too long domineered over all the charities of home : the dear domestic ties of father, brother, husband. The amiable and benevolent Cowper, has a beautiful passage in his ‘Task,’—some natural and painful reflections on his deceased parents : and Hayley’s sweet lines to his mother, are notoriously the best things he ever wrote. Cowper’s lines, some of them are



'How gladly would the man recall to life  
The boy's neglected sire; a mother, too!  
That softer name, perhaps more gladly still,  
Might he demand them at the gates of death.'

"I cannot but smile to see my granny so gayly decked forth: though, I think, whoever altered 'thy' praises to 'her' praises: 'thy' honoured memory to 'her' honoured memory, did wrong—they best exprest my feelings. There is a pensive state of recollection, in which the mind is disposed to apostrophise the departed objects of its attachment; and, breaking loose from grammatical precision, changes from the first to the third, and from the third to the first person, just as the random fancy or the feeling directs. Among Lloyd's sonnets, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th, are eminently beautiful. I think him too lavish of his expletives; the *do's* and *dids*, when they occur too often, bring a quaintness with them along with their simplicity, or rather air of antiquity, which the patrons of them seem desirous of conveying.

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"Another time, I may notice more particularly Lloyd's, Southey's, Dermody's Sonnets. I shrink from them now: my teasing lot makes me too confused for a clear judgment of things, too selfish for



sympathy; and these ill-digested, meaningless remarks, I have imposed on myself as a task, to lull reflection, as well as to show you, I did not neglect reading your valuable present. Return my acknowledgments to Lloyd; you two seem to be about realizing an Elysium upon earth, and, no doubt, I shall be happier. Take my best wishes. Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. C——, and give little David Hartley—God bless its little heart—a kiss for me. Bring him up to know the meaning of his Christian name, and what that name (imposed upon him) will demand of him.

“ God love you !

“ C. LAMB.

“ I write, for one thing to say, that I shall write no more till you send me word where you are, for you are so soon to move.

“ My sister is pretty well, thank God. We think of you very often. God bless you: continue to be my correspondent, and I will strive to fancy that this world is *not* ‘ all barrenness.’ ”

After several disappointments, occasioned by the state of business at the India House, Lamb achieved his long-checked wish of visiting Coleridge at Stowey, in company with his sister, without whom



he felt it almost a sin to enjoy any thing. Coleridge, shortly after, abandoned his scheme of a cottage-life; and, in the following year, left England for Germany. Lamb, however, was not now so lonely as when he wrote to Coleridge imploring his correspondence as the only comfort of his sorrows and labours; for, through the instrumentality of Coleridge, he was now rich in friends. Among them he marked George Dyer, the guileless and simple-hearted, whose love of learning was a passion, and who found, even in the forms of verse, objects of worship; Southey, in the young vigour of his genius; and Wordsworth, the great regenerator of English poetry, preparing for his long contest with the glittering forms of inane phraseology which had usurped the dominion of the public mind, and with the cold mockeries of scorn with which their supremacy was defended. By those the beauty of his character was felt; the original cast of his powers was appreciated; and his peculiar humour was detected and kindled into fitful life.



## CHAPTER IV.

[1798.]

## LAMB'S LITERARY EFFORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH SOUTHEY.

IN the year 1798, the blank verse of Lloyd and Lamb, which had been contained in the volume published in conjunction with Coleridge, was, with some additions by Lloyd, published in a thin duodecimo, price 2s. 6d., under the title of "Blank Verse, by Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb." This unpretending book was honoured by a brief and scornful notice in the catalogue of "The Monthly Review," in the small print of which the works of the poets who are now recognised as the greatest ornaments of their age, and who have impressed it most deeply by their genius, were usually named to be dismissed with a sneer. After a contemptuous notice of "The Mournful Muse" of Lloyd,



Lamb receives his *quietus* in a line:—"Mr. Lamb, the joint author of this little volume, seems to be very properly associated with his plaintive companion\*."

In this year Lamb composed his prose tale, "Rosamund Gray," and published it in a volume of the same size and price with the last, under the title of "A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret," which, having a semblance of story, sold much better than his poems, and added a few pounds to his slender income. This miniature romance is unique in English literature. It bears the impress of a recent perusal of "The Man of Feeling" and "Julia de Roubigné;" and while on the one hand it wants the graphic force and delicate touches of Mackenzie, it is informed with deeper feeling, and breathes a diviner morality than the most charming of his tales. Lamb never possessed the faculty of constructing a plot either for drama or novel; and while he luxuriated in the humour of Smollett, the wit of Fielding, or the solemn pathos of Richardson, he was not amused, but perplexed, by the attempt to tread the windings of story which conducts to their most exquisite pas-

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\* Monthly Review, Sept. 1798.



sages through the maze of adventure. In his tale, nothing is made out with distinctness, except the rustic piety and grace of the lovely girl and her venerable grandmother, which are pictured with such earnestness and simplicity, as might beseem a fragment of the Book of Ruth. The villain who lays waste their humble joys is a murky phantom without individuality; the events are obscured by the haze of sentiment which hovers over them; and the narrative gives way to the reflections of the author, who is mingled with the persons of the tale in visionary confusion, and gives to it the character of a sweet but disturbed dream. It has an interest now beyond that of fiction; for in it we may trace, "as in a glass darkly," the characteristics of the mind and heart of the author, at a time when a change was coming upon them. There are the dainty sense of beauty just weaned from its palpable object, and quivering over its lost images; feeling grown retrospective before its time, and tinging all things with a strange solemnity; hints of that craving after immediate appliances which might give impulse to a harassed frame, and confidence to struggling fancy, and of that escape from the pressure of agony into fantastic mirth, which in after life made Lamb a problem to a stranger, while



they endeared him a thousand-fold to those who really knew him. While the fullness of the religious sentiments, and the scriptural cast of the language, still partake of his early manhood; the visit of the narrator of the tale to the churchyard where his parents lie buried, after his nerves had been strung for the endeavour by wine at the village inn, and the half-frantic jollity of his old heart-broken friend, (the lover of the tale,) whom he met there, with the exquisite benignity of thought breathing through the whole, prophesy the delightful peculiarities and genial frailties of an after day. The reflections he makes on the eulogistic character of all the inscriptions, are drawn from his own childhood; for when a very little boy, walking with his sister in a churchyard, he suddenly asked her, "*Mary, where do the naughty people lie?*"

"Rosamund Gray" remained unreviewed till August, 1800, when it received the following notice in "The Monthly Review's" catalogue, the manufacturer of which was probably more tolerant of heterodox composition in prose than verse:—"In the perusal of this pathetic and interesting story, the reader who has a mind capable of enjoying rational and moral sentiment, will feel much gratification. Mr. Lamb has here proved himself skilful, in touch-



ing the nicest feelings of the heart, and in affording great pleasure to the imagination, by exhibiting events and situations which, in the hands of a writer less conversant with the springs and energies of the *moral sense*, would make a very ‘*sorry figure.*’” While we acknowledge this scanty praise as a redeeming trait in the long series of critical absurdities, we cannot help observing how curiously misplaced all the laudatory epithets are; the sentiment being profound and true, but not “*rational*,” and the “springs and energies of the moral sense” being substituted for a weakness which had a power of its own!

Lamb was introduced by Coleridge to Southey as early as the year 1795; but no intimacy ensued until he accompanied Lloyd in the summer of 1797 to the little village of Burton, near Christchurch, in Hampshire, where Southey was then residing, and where they spent a fortnight as the poet’s guests. After Coleridge’s departure for Germany, in 1798, a correspondence began between Lamb and Southey, which continued through that and part of the following year;—Southey communicates to Lamb his *Eclogues*, which he was then preparing for the press, and Lamb repaying the confidence by submitting the products of his own



leisure hours to his genial critic. If Southey did not, in all respects, compensate Lamb for the absence of his earlier friend, he excited in him a more entire and active intellectual sympathy; as the character of Southey's mind bore more resemblance to his own than that of Coleridge. In purity of thought; in the love of the minutest vestige of antiquity; in a certain primness of style bounding in the rich humour which threatened to overflow it; they were nearly akin; both alike revered childhood, and both had preserved its best attributes unspotted from the world. If Lamb bowed to the genius of Coleridge with a fonder reverence, he felt more at home with Southey; and although he did not pour out the inmost secrets of his soul in his letters to him as to Coleridge, he gave more scope to the "first sprightly runnings" of his humorous fancy. Here is the first of his freaks:—

## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"My tailor has brought me home a new coat lapelled, with a velvet collar. He assures me every body wears velvet collars now. Some are born fashionable, some achieve fashion, and others, like your



humble servant, have fashion thrust upon them. The rogue has been making inroads hitherto by modest degrees, foisting upon me an additional button, recommending gaiters, but to come upon me thus in a full tide of luxury, neither becomes him as a tailor or the ninth of a man. My meek gentleman was robbed the other day, coming with his wife and family in a one-horse shay from Hampstead; the villains rifled him of four guineas, some shillings and half-pence, and a bundle of customers' measures, which they swore were bank notes. They did not shoot him, and when they rode off he addrest them with profound gratitude, making a congee: 'Gentlemen, I wish you good night, and we are very much obliged to you that you have not used us ill!' And this is the cuckoo that has had the audacity to foist upon me ten buttons on a side, and a black velvet collar.—A cursed ninth of a scoundrel!"

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"When you write to Lloyd, he wishes his Jacobin correspondents to address him as *Mr. C. L.*"

The following letter—yet richer in fun—bears date Saturday July 28, 1798. In order to make



its allusions intelligible, it is only necessary to mention that Southey was then contemplating a calendar illustrative of the remarkable days of the year.

## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“ I am ashamed that I have not thanked you before this for the ‘ Joan of Arc,’ but I did not know your address, and it did not occur to me to write through Cottle. The poem delighted me, and the notes amused me, but methinks she of Neufchatel, in the print, holds her sword too ‘ like a dancer.’ I sent your *notice* to Phillips, particularly requesting an immediate insertion, but I suppose it came too late. I am sometimes curious to know what progress you make in that same ‘ Calendar,’ whether you insert the nine worthies and Whittington ; what you do or how you can manage when two Saints meet and quarrel for precedence ; Martlemas, and Candlemas, and Christmas, are glorious themes for a writer, like you, antiquity-bitten, smit with the love of boars’ heads and rosemary ; but how you can ennoble the 1st of April I know not. By the way, I had a thing to say, but a certain false modesty has hitherto prevented me : perhaps I can best communicate my wish by a



hint,—my birth-day is on the 10th of February, new style, but if it interferes with any remarkable event, why rather than my country should lose her fame, I care not if I put my nativity back eleven days. Fine family patronage for your ‘Calendar,’ if that old lady of prolific memory were living, who lies (or lyes) in some church in London (saints forgive me, but I have forgot *what* church), attesting that enormous legend of as many children as days in the year. I marvel her impudence did not grasp at a leap year. Three hundred and sixty-five dedications, and all in a family—you might spit in spirit, on the oneness of Mecænas patronage!

“Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to the eternal regret of his native Devonshire, emigrates to Westphalia—‘Poor Lamb (these were his last words) if he wants any *knowledge*, he may apply to me,’——in ordinary cases I thanked him, I have an ‘Encyclopedia’ at hand, but on such an occasion as going over to a German university, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Gottingen.



## THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ.

## I.

“ Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man ? ”

## II.

“ Whether the archangel Uriel *could* knowingly affirm an untruth, and whether, if he *could*, he *would* ? ”

## III.

“ Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather belonging to that class of qualities which the schoolmen term ‘virtutes minus splendidæ, et hominis et terræ nimis participes ? ’ ”

## IV.

“ Whether the seraphim ardentes do not manifest their goodness by the way of vision and theory ? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial, and merely human virtue ? ”

## V.

“ Whether the higher order of seraphim illuminati ever *sneer* ? ”

## VI.

“ Whether pure intelligences can *love*, or



whether they can love anything besides pure intellect?"

## VII.

"Whether the beatific vision be any thing more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments, and future capabilities, something in the manner of mortal looking-glasses?"

## VIII.

"Whether an 'immortal and amenable soul may not come *to be damn'd at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand?*"

"Samuel Taylor hath not deign'd an answer; was it impertinent in me to avail myself of that offer'd source of knowledge?"

"Wishing Madoc may be born into the world with as splendid promise as the second birth, or purification, of the Maid of Neufchatel,—I remain yours sincerely,

"C. LAMB.

"I hope Edith is better; my kindest remembrances to her. You have a good deal of trifling to forgive in this letter. Love and respects to Cottle."



The two next fragments of letters to Southey illustrate strikingly the restless kindness and exquisite spirit of allowance in Lamb's nature; the first an earnest pleading for a poor fellow whose distress actually haunted him; the second an affecting allusion to the real goodness of a wild untoward school-mate, and fine self-reproval—in this instance how unmerited!

## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“Dear Southey,—Your friend John May has formerly made kind offers to Lloyd of serving me in the India House, by the interest of his friend Sir Francis Baring. It is not likely that I shall ever put his goodness to the test on my own account, for my prospects are very comfortable. But I know a man, a young man, whom he could serve through the same channel, and, I think, would be disposed to serve if he were acquainted with his case. This poor fellow (whom I know just enough of to vouch for his strict integrity and worth) has lost two or three employments from illness, which he cannot regain; he was once insane, and, from the distressful uncertainty of his



livelihood, has reason to apprehend a return of that malady. He has been for some time dependent on a woman, whose lodger he formerly was, but who can ill afford to maintain him; and I know that on Christmas night last he actually walked about the streets all night rather than accept of her bed, which she offered him, and offered herself to sleep in the kitchen; and that, in consequence of that severe cold, he is labouring under a bilious disorder, besides a depression of spirits, which incapacitates him from exertion when he most needs it. For God's sake, Southey, if it does not go against you to ask favours, do it now; ask it as for me; but do not do a violence to your feelings, because he does not know of this application, and will suffer no disappointment. What I meant to say was this,—there are in the India House what are called *extra clerks*, not on the establishment, like me, but employed in extra business, by-jobs; these get about £50 a-year, or rather more, but never rise; a director can put in at any time a young man in this office, and it is by no means considered so great a favour as making an established clerk. He would think himself as rich as an emperor if he could get such



a certain situation, and be relieved from those inquietudes which, I do fear, may one day bring back his distemper.

“ You know John May better than I do, but I know enough to believe that he is a good man; he did make me that offer I have mentioned, but you will perceive that such an offer cannot authorize me in applying for another person.

“ But I cannot help writing to you on the subject, for the young man is perpetually before my eyes, and I shall feel it a crime not to strain all my petty interest to do him service, tho’ I put my own delicacy to the question by so doing. I have made one other unsuccessful attempt already; at all events, I will thank you to write, for I am tormented with anxiety.

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“ Poor ——— ! I am afraid the world, and the camp, and the university, have spoilt him amongst them. ’Tis certain he had at one time a strong capacity of turning out something better. I knew him, and that not long since, when he had a most warm heart. I am ashamed of the indifference I have sometimes felt towards him. I think the



devil is in one's heart. I am under obligations to that man for the warmest friendship, and heartiest sympathy, even for an agony of sympathy expressed both by word, and deed, and tears for me, when I was in my greatest distress. But I have forgot that! as, I fear, he has nigh forgot the awful scenes which were before his eyes when he served the office of a comforter to me. No service was too mean or troublesome for him to perform. I can't think what but the devil, 'that old spider,' could have suck'd my heart so dry of its sense of all gratitude. If he does come in your way, Southey, fail not to tell him that I retain a most affectionate remembrance of his old friendliness, and an earnest wish to resume our intercourse. In this I am serious. I cannot recommend him to your society, because I am afraid whether he be quite worthy of it. But I have no right to dismiss him from *my* regard. He was at one time, and in the worst of times, my own familiar friend, and great comfort to me then. I have known him to play at cards with my father, meal times excepted, literally all day long, in long days too, to save me from being teased by the old man, when I was not able to bear it.



“God bless him for it, and God bless you,  
Southey.

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“C. L.”

Lamb now began to write the tragedy of John Woodvil. His admiration of the dramatists of Elizabeth's age was yet young, and had some of the indiscretion of an early love; but there was nothing affected in the antique cast of his language, or the frequent roughness of his verse. His delicate sense of beauty had found a congenial organ in the style which he tasted with rapture; and criticism gave him little encouragement to adapt it to the frigid insipidities of the time. “My tragedy,” says he in the first letter to Southey, which alludes to the play, “will be a medley (I intend it to be a medley) of laughter and tears, prose and verse; and, in some places, rhyme; songs, wit, pathos, humour; and, if possible, sublimity;—at least, 'tis not a fault in my intention if it does not comprehend most of these discordant atoms—Heaven send they dance not the dance of death!” In another letter he there introduces the delicious rhymed passage in the “Forest Scene,” which Godwin,



having accidentally seen quoted, took for a choice fragment of an old dramatist, and went to Lamb to assist him in finding the author.

## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“ I just send you a few rhymes from my play, the only rhymes in it. A forest-liver giving an account of his amusements.

‘ What sports have you in the forest?  
Not many,—some few,—as thus,  
To see the sun to bed, and see him rise,  
Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,  
Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him :  
With all his fires and travelling glories round him :  
Sometimes the moon on soft night-clouds to rest,  
Like beauty nestling in a young man’s breast.  
And all the winking stars, her handmaids, keep  
Admiring silence, while those lovers sleep :  
Sometimes outstretched in very idleness,  
Nought doing, saying little, thinking less,  
To view the leaves, thin dancers upon air,  
Go eddying round ; and small birds how they fare,  
When mother autumn fills their beaks with corn,  
Filch’d from the careless Amalthea’s horn ;  
And how the woods berries and worms provide,  
Without their pains, when earth hath nought beside  
To answer their small wants ;  
To view the graceful deer come trooping by,  
Then pause, and gaze, then turn they know not why,  
Like bashful youngers in society ;



To mark the structure of a plant or tree ;  
 And all fair things of earth, how fair they be !  
 &c., &c.'

“I love to anticipate charges of unoriginality :  
 the first line is almost Shakspeare's :—

‘ To have my love to bed and to arise.’  
*Midsummer's Night's Dream.*

“I think there is a sweetness in the versification  
 not unlike some rhymes in that exquisite play, and  
 the last line but three is yours :

‘ An eye,  
 That met the gaze, or turn'd it knew not why.’  
*Rosamund's Epistle.*

“I shall anticipate all my play, and have nothing  
 to shew you. An idea for Leviathan—Commen-  
 tators on Job have been puzzled to find out a  
 meaning for Leviathan,—’tis a whale, say some ;  
 a crocodile, say others. In my simple conjecture,  
 Leviathan is neither more nor less than the Lord  
 Mayor of London for the time being.”

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He seems also to have sent about this time the  
 solemnly fantastic poem of the “Witch,” as the  
 following passage relates to one of its conceits :



## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“Your recipe for a Turk’s poison is invaluable, and truly Marlowish . . . Lloyd objects to ‘shutting up the womb of his purse’ in my curse, (which, for a Christian witch in a Christian country is not too mild, I hope,) do you object? I think there is a strangeness in the idea, as well as ‘shaking the poor like snakes from his door,’ which suits the speaker. Witches illustrate, as fine ladies do, from their own familiar objects, and snakes and shutting up of wombs are in their way. I don’t know that this last charge has been before brought against ’em, nor either the sour milk or the mandrake babe; but I affirm these be things a witch would do if she could.”

Here is a specimen of Lamb’s criticism on Southey’s poetical communications.

## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“I have read your Eclogue repeatedly, and cannot call it bald, or without interest; the cast of it, and the design are completely original, and may set people upon thinking: it is as poetical as the subject requires, which asks no poetry; but it is de-



fective in pathos. The woman's own story is the tamest part of it—I should like you to remould that—it too much resembles the young maid's history, both had been in service. Even the omission would not injure the poem; after the words 'growing wants,' you might, not unconnectedly, introduce 'look at that little chub' down to 'welcome one.' And, decidedly, I would have you end it somehow thus, 'Give them at least this evening a good meal, (gives her money,) now, fare thee well: hereafter you have taught me to give sad meaning to the village-bells,' &c. which would leave a stronger impression, (as well as more pleasingly recall the beginning of the Eclogue,) than the present commonplace reference to a better world, which the woman 'must have heard at church.' I should like you too a good deal to enlarge the most striking part, as it might have been, of the poem—'Is it idleness?' &c. that affords a good field for dwelling on sickness, and inabilities, and old age. And you might also a good deal enrich the piece with a picture of a country wedding: the woman might very well, in a transient fit of oblivion, dwell upon the ceremony and circumstances of her own nuptials six years ago, the snugness of the bridegroom, the feasting, the cheap merriment, the welcomings, and the



secret envyings of the maidens—then dropping all this, recur to her present lot. I do not know that I can suggest anything else, or that I have suggested anything new or material. I shall be very glad to see some more poetry, though, I fear, your trouble in transcribing will be greater than the service my remarks may do them.

“Yours affectionately,

“C. LAMB.

“I cut my letter short because I am called off to business.”

The following, of the same character, is further interesting, as tracing the origin of his “*Rosamund*,” and exhibiting his young enthusiasm for the old English drama, so nobly developed in his “*Specimens* :”—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“Dear Southey,—I thank you heartily for the *Eclogue* ; it pleases me mightily, being so full of picture-work and circumstances. I find no fault in it, unless perhaps that Joanna’s ruin is a catastrophe too trite : and this is not the first or second time you have clothed your indignation, in verse, in a tale of ruined innocence. The old lady, spinning



in the sun, I hope would not disdain to claim some kindred with old Margaret. I could almost wish you to vary some circumstances in the conclusion. A gentleman seducer has often been described in prose and verse; what if you had accomplished Joanna's ruin by the clumsy arts and rustic gifts of some country fellow? I am thinking, I believe, of the song,

‘An old woman clothed in grey,  
Whose daughter was charming and young,  
And she was deluded away  
By Roger's false flattering tongue.’

A Roger-Lothario would be a novel character; I think you might paint him very well. You may think this a very silly suggestion, and so indeed it is; but, in good truth, nothing else but the first words of that foolish ballad put me upon scribbling my ‘Rosamund.’ But I thank you heartily for the poem. Not having any thing of my own to send you in return—though, to tell truth, I am at work upon something, which, if I were to cut away and garble, perhaps I might send you an extract or two that might not displease you; but I will not do that; and whether it will come to any thing, I know not, for I am as slow as a Fleming painter when I compose any thing—I will crave leave to



put down a few lines of old Christopher Marlow's; I take them from his tragedy, 'The Jew of Malta.' The Jew is a famous character, quite out of nature; but, when we consider the terrible idea our simple ancestors had of a Jew, not more to be discom-mended for a certain discolouring (I think Addison calls it) than the witches and fairies of Marlow's mighty successor. The scene is betwixt Barabas, the Jew, and Ithamore, a Turkish captive, exposed to sale for a slave.

BARABAS,

(*A precious rascal.*)

As for myself, I walk abroad a nights,  
And kill sick people groaning under walls :  
Sometimes I go about, and poison wells ;  
And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,  
I am content to lose some of my crowns,  
That I may, walking in my gallery,  
See 'm go pinioned along by my door.  
Being young I studied physic, and began  
To practice first upon the Italian :  
There I enriched the priests with burials,  
And always kept the sexton's arms in use  
With digging graves, and ringing dead men's knells ;  
And, after that, was I an engineer,  
And in the wars 'twixt France and Germany,  
Under pretence of serving Charles the Fifth,  
Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems.  
Then after that was I an usurer,  
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,  
And tricks belonging unto brokery,



I fill'd the jail with bankrupts in a year,  
 And with young orphans planted hospitals,  
 And every moon made some or other mad ;  
 And now and then one hang himself for grief,  
 Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll,  
 How I with interest had tormented him.

(Now hear Ithamore, the other gentle nature.)

ITHAMORE,

(*A comical dog.*)

Faith, master, and I have spent my time  
 In setting Christian villages on fire,  
 Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley slaves.  
 One time I was an hostler in an inn,  
 And in the night time secretly would I steal  
 To travellers' chambers, and there cut their throats.  
 Once at Jerusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,  
 I strewed powder on the marble stones,  
 And therewithal their knees would rankle so,  
 That I have laugh'd a good to see the cripples  
 Go limping home to Christendom on stilts

BARABAS.

Why, this is something—'

“There is a mixture of the ludicrous and the terrible in these lines, brimful of genius and antique invention, that at first reminded me of your old description of cruelty in hell.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I am glad you have put me on the scent after



old Quarles. If I do not put up those eclogues, and that shortly, say I am no true-nosed hound."

The following letters, which must have been written after a short interval, show a rapid change of opinion, very unusual with Lamb, (who stuck to his favourite books as he did to his friends,) as to the relative merits of the "Emblems" of Wither and of Quarles:—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I perfectly accord with your opinion of old Wither; Quarles is a wittier writer, but Wither lays more hold of the heart. Quarles thinks of his audience when he lectures; Wither soliloquizes in company from a full heart. What wretched stuff are the 'Divine Fancies' of Quarles! Religion appears to him no longer valuable than it furnishes matter for quibbles and riddles; he turns God's grace into wantonness. Wither is like an old friend, whose warm-heartedness and estimable qualities make us wish he possessed more genius, but at the same time make us willing to dispense with that want. I always love W., and sometimes admire Q. Still that portrait poem is a fine one; and the extract from 'Shepherds' Hunting' places



him in a starry height far above Quarles. If you wrote that review in 'Crit. Rev.,' I am sorry you are so sparing of praise to the Ancient Marinere,—so far from calling it as you do, with some wit, but more severity, 'A Dutch attempt,' &c., I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the miracles they celebrate. I never so deeply felt the pathetic, as in that part,

'A spring of love gush'd from my heart,  
And I bless'd them unaware'—

It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings. Lloyd does not like it; his head is too metaphysical, and your taste too correct; at least I must allege something against you both, to excuse my own dotage—

'So lonely 'twas that God himself  
Scarce seemed there to be!!'

&c., &c.

But you allow some elaborate beauties—you should have extracted 'em. 'The Ancient Marinere' plays more tricks with the mind than that last poem, which is yet one of the finest written. But I am getting too dogmatical; and before I degenerate



into abuse, I will conclude with assuring you that  
I am

“ Sincerely yours,

“ C. LAMB.

“ I am going to meet Lloyd at Ware, on Saturday, to return on Sunday. Have you any commands or commendations to the metaphysician? I shall be very happy if you will dine or spend any time with me in your way through the great ugly city; but I know you have other ties upon you in these parts.

“ Love and respects to Edith, and friendly remembrances to Cottle.”

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“ Dear Southey,—I have at last been so fortunate as to pick up Wither’s Emblems for you, that ‘old book and quaint,’ as the brief author of Rosamund Gray hath it; it is in a most detestable state of preservation, and the cuts are of a fainter impression than I have seen. Some child, the curse of antiquaries and bane of bibliopical rarities, hath been dabbling in some of them with its paint and dirty fingers; and, in particular, hath a little sullied the author’s own portraiture, which I think valu-



able, as the poem that accompanies it is no common one, this last excepted; the Emblems are far inferior to old Quarles. I once told you otherwise, but I had not then read old Q. with attention. I have pick'd up, too, another copy of Quarles for nine pence!!! O tempora! O lectores! so that if you have lost or parted with your own copy, say so, and I can furnish you, for you prize these things more than I do. You will be amus'd, I think, with honest Wither's 'Supersedeas to all them whose custom it is, without any deserving, to importune authors to give unto them their books.' I am sorry 'tis imperfect, as the lottery board annex'd to it also is. Methinks you might modernize and elegantize this Supersedeas, and place it in front of your Joan of Arc, as a gentle hint to Messrs. P——, &c. One of the happiest emblems, and comicallest cuts, is the owl and little chirpers, page 63.

“Wishing you all amusement, which your true emblem-fancier can scarce fail to find in even bad emblems, I remain your caterer to command,

“C. LAMB.

“Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well. How does your Calendar prosper?”



In this year, Mr. Cottle proposed to publish an annual volume of fugitive poetry by various hands, under the title of the "Annual Anthology;" to which Coleridge and Southey were principal contributors, the first volume of which was published in the following year. To this little work Lamb contributed a short religious effusion in blank verse, entitled "Living without God in the World." The following letter to Southey refers to this poem by its first words, "Mystery of God," and recurs to the rejected sonnet to his sister; and alludes to an intention, afterwards changed, of entitling the proposed collection "Gleanings."

## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"I can have no objection to your printing 'Mystery of God' with my name, and all due acknowledgements for the honour and favour of the communication; indeed, 'tis a poem that can dishonour no name. Now, that is in the true strain of modern modesto-vanitas. . . . But for the sonnet, I heartily wish it, as I thought it was, dead and forgotten. If the exact circumstances under which I wrote could be known or told, it would be an interesting sonnet; but, to an indifferent and stranger reader, it must appear a very bald



thing, certainly inadmissible in a compilation. I wish you could affix a different name to the volume; there is a contemptible book, a wretched assortment of vapid feelings, entitled *Pratt's Gleanings*, which hath damn'd and impropriated the title for ever. Pray, think of some other. The gentleman is better known (better had he remained unknown) by an Ode to Benevolence, written and spoken for and at the annual dinner of the Humane Society, who walk in procession once a-year, with all the objects of their charity before them, to return God thanks for giving them such benevolent hearts."

\* \* \* \*

At this time Lamb's most intimate associates were Lloyd and Jem White, the author of the *Falstaff Letters*. When Lloyd was in town, he and White lodged in the same house, and were fast friends, though no two men could be more unlike, Lloyd having no drollery in his nature, and White nothing else. "You will easily understand," observes Mr. Southey, in a letter with which he favoured the publisher, "how Lamb could sympathise with both."

The literary association of Lamb with Coleridge



and Southey drew down upon him the hostility of the young scorers of the "Anti-jacobin," who, luxuriating in boyish pride and aristocratic patronage, tossed the arrows of their wit against all charged with innovation, whether in politics or poetry, and cared little whom they wounded. No one could be more innocent than Lamb of political heresy; no one more strongly opposed to new theories in morality, which he always regarded with disgust; and yet he not only shared in the injustice which accused his friends of the last, but was confounded in the charge of the first,—his only crime being that he had published a few poems deeply coloured with religious enthusiasm, in conjunction with two other men of genius, who were dazzled by the glowing phantoms which the French revolution had raised. The very first number of the "Anti-jacobin Magazine and Review" was adorned by a caricature of Gilray's, in which Coleridge and Southey were introduced with asses' heads, and Lloyd and Lamb as toad and frog. In the number for July appeared the well-known poem of the "New Morality," in which all the prominent objects of the hatred of these champions of religion and order were introduced as offering homage to Lepaux, a French charlatan,—of whose existence Lamb had never even heard.



“ Couriers and Stars, sedition’s evening host,  
 Thou Morning Chronicle, and Morning Post,  
 Whether ye make the ‘ Rights of Man’ your theme,  
 Your country libel, and your God blaspheme,  
*Or dirt on private worth and virtue throw,*  
 Still *blasphemous or blackguard*, praise Lepaux.

And ye five other wand’ring bards, that move  
 In sweet accord of harmony and love,  
 C——dge and S—th—y, L—d, and L—b & Co.,  
 Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux !”

Not content with thus confounding persons of the most opposite opinions and the most various characters in one common libel, the party returned to the charge in the number for September, and thus denounced the young poets, in a parody on the “ Ode to the Passions,” under the title of “ The Anarchists.”

“ Next H—lc—ft vow’d in doleful tone,  
 No more to fire a thankless age :  
 Oblivion mark’d his labours for her own,  
 Neglected from the press, and damn’d upon the stage.

See ! faithful to their mighty dam,  
 C——dge, S—th—y, L—d, and L—b  
 In splay-foot madrigals of love,  
 Soft moaning like the widow’d dove,  
 Pour, side-by-side, their sympathetic notes ;

Of equal rights, and civic feasts,  
 And tyrant kings, and knavish priests,  
 Swift through the land the tuneful mischief floats.



And now to softer strains they struck the lyre,  
They sung the beetle or the mole,  
The dying kid, or ass's foal,  
By cruel man permitted to expire."

These effusions have the palliation which the excess of sportive wit, impelled by youthful spirits and fostered by the applause of the great brings with it; but it will be difficult to palliate the coarse malignity of a passage in the prose department of the same work, in which the writer added to a statement that Mr. Coleridge was dishonoured at Cambridge for preaching Deism: "Since then he has left his native country, commenced citizen of the world, left his poor children fatherless, and his wife destitute. *Ex his disce*, his friends Lamb and Southey." It was surely rather too much even for partisans, when denouncing their political opponents as men who "dirt on private worth and virtue threw," thus to slander two young men of the most exemplary character—one of an almost puritanical exactness of demeanour and conduct—and the other persevering in a life of noble self-sacrifice, chequered only by the frailties of a sweet nature, which endeared him even to those who were not admitted to the intimacy necessary to appreciate the touching example of his severer virtues!



If Lamb's acquaintance with Coleridge and Southey procured for him the scorn of the more virulent of the Anti-Jacobin party, he showed by his intimacy with another distinguished object of their animosity, that he was not solicitous to avert it. He was introduced by Mr. Coleridge to one of the most remarkable persons of that stirring time—the author of “Caleb Williams,” and of the “Political Justice.” The first meeting between Lamb and Godwin did not wear a promising aspect. Lamb grew warm as the conviviality of the evening advanced, and indulged in some freaks of humour which had not been dreamed of in Godwin's philosophy ; and the philosopher, forgetting the equanimity with which he usually looked on the vicissitudes of the world or the whist-table, broke into an allusion to Gilray's caricature, and asked, “Mr. Lamb, are you both *toad and frog* ?” Coleridge was apprehensive of a rupture ; but calling the next morning on Lamb, he found Godwin seated at breakfast with him ; and an interchange of civilities and card-parties was established, which lasted through the life of Lamb, whom Godwin only survived a few months. Indifferent altogether to the politics of the age, Lamb could not help being struck with productions of its new-born energies,



so remarkable as the works and the character of Godwin. He seemed to realise in himself what Wordsworth long afterwards described, "the central calm at the heart of all agitation." Through the medium of his mind the stormy convulsions of society were seen "silent as in a picture." Paradoxes the most daring wore the air of deliberate wisdom as he pronounced them. He foretold the future happiness of mankind, not with the inspiration of the poet, but with the grave and passionless voice of the oracle. There was nothing better calculated at once to feed and to make steady the enthusiasm of youthful patriots than the high speculations in which he taught them to engage on the nature of social evils and the great destiny of his species. No one would have suspected the author of those wild theories which startled the wise and shocked the prudent, in the calm, gentlemanly person who rarely said any thing above the most gentle common-place, and took interest in little beyond the whist-table. His peculiar opinions were entirely subservient to his love of letters. He thought any man who had written a book had attained a superiority over his fellows which placed him in another class, and could scarcely understand other distinctions. Of all his works Lamb liked his



“ Essay on Sepulchres ” the best—a short development of a scheme for preserving in one place the memory of all great writers deceased, and assigning to each his proper station,—quite chimerical in itself, but accompanied with solemn and touching musings on life and death and fame, embodied in a style of singular refinement and beauty.



## CHAPTER V.

[1799, 1800.]

LETTERS TO SOUTHEY, COLERIDGE, MANNING,  
AND WORDSWORTH.

THE year 1799 found Lamb engaged during his leisure hours in completing his tragedy of John Woodvil, which seems to have been finished about Christmas, and transmitted to Mr. Kemble. Like all young authors, who are fascinated by the splendour of theatrical representation, he longed to see his conceptions embodied on the stage, and to receive his immediate reward in the sympathy of a crowd of excited spectators. The hope was vain ;—but it cheered him in many a lonely hour, and inspired him to write when exhausted with the business of the day, and when the less powerful stimulus of the press would have been insufficient to rouse him. In the meantime he continued to correspond with Mr. Southey,



to send him portions of his play, and to reciprocate criticisms with him. The following three letters, addressed to Mr. Southey in the spring of this year, require no commentary.

## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

\* \* \* \*

“ I am to blame for not writing to you before on *my own account*; but I know you can dispense with the expressions of gratitude, or I should have thanked you before for all May’s kindness.\* He has liberally supplied the person I spoke to you of with money, and had procured him a situation just after himself had lighted upon a similar one, and engaged too far to recede. But May’s kindness was the same, and my thanks to you and him are the same. May went about on this business as if it had been his own. But you knew John May before this, so I will be silent.

“ I shall be very glad to hear from you, when convenient. I do not know how your Calendar and other affairs thrive; but, above all, I have not heard a great while of your Madoc — the *opus magnum*. I would willingly send you something to give a value to this letter; but I have only one

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\* See *ante*, p. 99.



slight passage to send you, scarce worth the sending, which I want to edge in somewhere into my play, which, by the way, hath not received the addition of ten lines, besides, since I saw you. A father, old Walter Woodvil, (the witch's PRO-TÉGÉ) relates this of his son John, who 'fought in adverse armies,' being a royalist, and his father a parliamentary man.

'I saw him in the day of Worcester fight,  
 Whither he came at twice seven years,  
 Under the discipline of the Lord Falkland,  
 (His uncle by the mother's side,  
 Who gave his youthful politics a bent  
 Quite *from* the principles of his father's house;) )  
 There did I see this valiant Lamb of Mars,  
 This sprig of honour, this unbearded John,  
 This veteran in green years, this sprout, this Woodvil,  
 (With dreadless ease guiding a fire-hot steed,  
 Which seemed to scorn the manage of a boy,)  
 Prick forth with such a *mirth* into the field,  
 To mingle rivalry and acts of war  
 Even with the sinewy masters of the art,—  
 You would have thought the work of blood had been  
 A play-game merely, and the rabid Mars  
 Had put his harmful hostile nature off,  
 To instruct raw youth in images of war,  
 And practice of the unedg'd players' foils.  
 The rough fanatic and blood-practiced soldiery,  
 Seeing such hope and virtue in the boy,  
 Disclos'd their ranks to let him pass unhurt,  
 Checking their swords' uncivil injuries,  
 As loth to mar that curious workmanship  
 Of Valour's beauty pourtrayed in his face.'



“Lloyd objects to ‘pourtrayed in his face,’ do you? I like the line.

“I shall clap this in somewhere. I think there is a spirit through the lines; perhaps the 7th, 8th, and 9th owe their origin to Shakspeare, though no image is borrowed. He says in Henry the Fourth—

‘This infant Hotspur,  
Mars in swathing clothes.’

But pray did Lord Falkland die before Worcester fight? In that case I must make bold to unclify some other nobleman.

“Kind love and respects to Edith.

“C. LAMB.”

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#### TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“I am hugely pleased with your ‘Spider,’ ‘your old free-mason,’ as you call him. The three first stanzas are delicious; they seem to me a compound of Burns and old Quarles, those kind of home-strokes, where more is felt than strikes the ear; a terseness, a jocular pathos, which makes one feel in laughter. The measure, too, is novel and pleasing. I could almost wonder, Rob. Burns, in his lifetime never stumbled upon it. The fourth stanza



is less striking, as being less original. The fifth falls off. It has no felicity of phrase, no old-fashioned phrase or feeling.

‘Young hopes, and love’s delightful dreams,’

savour neither of Burns nor Quarles; they seem more like shreds of many a modern sentimental sonnet. The last stanza hath nothing striking in it, if I except the two concluding lines, which are Burns all over. I wish, if you concur with me, these things could be looked to. I am sure this is a kind of writing, which comes ten-fold better recommended to the heart, comes there more like a neighbour or familiar, than thousands of Hamnels and Zillahs and Madelons. I beg you will send me the ‘Holly-tree,’ if it at all resemble this, for it must please me. I have never seen it. I love this sort of poems, that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened. Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophised a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Coleridge less successfully hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein only following, at un-resembling distance, Sterne and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our



‘poor earth-born companions.’ It is sometimes revolting to be put in a track of feeling by other people, not one’s own immediate thoughts, else I would persuade you, if I could, I am in earnest, to commence a series of these animal poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts come across me; for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole—people bake moles alive by a slow oven-fire to cure consumption—rats are, indeed, the most despised and contemptible parts of God’s earth. I killed a rat the other day by punching him to pieces, and feel a weight of blood upon me to this hour. Toads, you know, are made to fly, and tumble down and crush all to pieces. Cockchafers are old sport; then again to a worm, with an apostrophe to anglers, those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs intolerable, cool devils; to an owl; to all snakes, with an apology for their poison; to a cat in boots or bladders. Your own fancy, if it takes a fancy to these hints, will suggest many more. A series of such poems, suppose them accompanied with plates descriptive of animal torments, cooks roasting lobsters, fishmongers crimping scates, &c. &c. would take excessively. I will willingly enter into



a partnership in the plan with you: I think my heart and soul would go with it too—at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head; but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good, and useful, full of pleasure, and full of moral. If old Quarles and Wither could live again, we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part.

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## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“Dear Southey,—I have received your little volume, for which I thank you, though I do not entirely approve of this sort of intercourse, where the presents are all on one side. I have read the last Eclogue again with great pleasure. It hath gained considerably by abridgment, and now I think it wants nothing but enlargement. You will call this one of tyrant Procrustes’ criticisms, to cut and pull so to his own standard; but the old lady is so great a favourite with me, I want to hear more of her; and of ‘Joanna’ you have given us still less. But the picture of the rustics leaning over the bridge, and the old lady travelling abroad on summer evening to see her garden watered, are images so new and true, that I decidedly prefer



this 'Ruin'd Cottage' to any poem in the book. Indeed I think it the only one that will bear comparison with your 'Hymn to the Penates,' in a former volume.

"I compare dissimilar things, as one would a rose and a star, for the pleasure they give us, or as a child soon learns to chuse between a cake and a rattle; for dissimilars have mostly some points of comparison. The next best poem, I think, is the first Eclogue; 'tis very complete, and abounding in little pictures and realities. The remainder Eclogues, excepting only the 'Funeral,' I do not greatly admire. I miss *one*, which had at least as good a title to publication as the 'Witch,' or the 'Sailor's Mother.' You call'd it the 'Last of the Family.' The 'Old Woman of Berkeley' comes next; in some humours I would give it the preference above any. But who the devil is Matthew of Westminster? You are as familiar with these antiquated monastics, as Swedenborg, or, as his followers affect to call him, the Baron, with his invisibles. But you have raised a very comic effect out of the true narrative of Matthew of Westminster. 'Tis surprising with how little addition you have been able to convert, with so little alteration, his incidents, meant for terror, into circumstances and food for spleen. The Parody is *not*



so successful ; it has one famous line, indeed, which conveys the finest death-bed scene I ever met with.

‘ The doctor whisper’d the nurse, and the surgeon knew what he said ;’

But the offering the bribe three times bears not the slightest analogy or proportion to the fiendish noises three times heard ! In ‘ Jaspar,’ the circumstance of the great light is very affecting. But I had heard you mention it before. The ‘ Rose ’ is the only insipid piece in the volume ; it hath neither thorns nor sweetness ; and, besides, sets all chronology and probability at defiance.

“ ‘ Cousin Margaret,’ you know, I like. The allusions to the Pilgrim’s Progress are particularly happy, and harmonize tacitly and delicately with old cousins and aunts. To familiar faces we do associate familiar scenes, and accustomed objects ; but what hath Apollidon and his sea nymphs to do in these affairs ? Apollyon I could have borne, tho’ he stands for the devil, but who is Appolidon ? I think you are too apt to conclude faintly, with some cold moral, as in the end of the poem call’d ‘ The Victory’—

‘ Be thou her comforter, who art the widow’s friend ;’

a single common-place line of comfort, which bears no proportion in weight or number to



the many lines which describe suffering. This is to convert religion into mediocre feelings, which should burn, and glow, and tremble. A moral should be wrought into the body and soul, the matter and tendency, of a poem, not tagg'd to the end, like a 'God send the good ship into harbour,' at the conclusion of our bills of lading. The finishing of the 'Sailor' is also imperfect. Any dissenting minister may say and do as much.

"These remarks, I know, are crude and unwrought, but I do not lay claim to much accurate thinking. I never judge system-wise of things, but fasten often upon particulars. After all, there is a great deal in the book that I must, for time, leave *unmentioned*, to deserve my thanks for its own sake, as well as for the friendly remembrances implied in the gift. I again return you my thanks.

"Pray present my love to Edith.

"C. L."

In the summer Lamb revisited the scenes in Hertfordshire, where, in his grandmother's time, he had spent so many happy holidays. In the following letter, he just hints at feelings which, many years after, he so beautifully developed in those essays of 'Elia,'—'Blakesmoor House,' and 'Mackery End.'



## TO MR. SOUTHEY.

“ Dear Southey,—I have but just got your letter, being returned from Herts., where I have pass’d a few red letter days with much pleasure. I would describe the country to you, as you have done by Devonshire, but, alas ! I am a poor pen at that same. I could tell you of an old house with a tapestry bed-room, the judgment of Solomon composing one pannel, and Actæon spying Diana naked, the other. I could tell of an old marble-hall, with Hogarth’s prints, and the Roman Cæsars in marble hung round. I could tell of a *wilderness*, and of a village church, and where the bones of my honour’d grandam lie ; but there are feelings which refuse to be translated, sulky aborigines, which will not be naturalized in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces, and scenes of infancy.

“ I have given your address, and the books you want, to the A——’s ; they will send them as soon as they can get them, but they do not seem quite familiar to their names. I shall have nothing to communicate, I fear, to the Anthology. You shall have some fragments of my play, if you desire them, but I think I had rather print it whole.



Have you seen it? or shall I lend you a copy. I want your opinion of it.

“I must get to business, so farewell; my kind remembrances to Edith.”

In the autumn of this year Lamb's choice list of friends received a most important addition in Mr. Thomas Manning, then a mathematical tutor at Cambridge; of whom he became a frequent correspondent, and to whom he remained strongly attached through life. Lloyd had become a graduate of the university, and to his introduction Lamb was indebted for Manning's friendship. The following letters will show how earnestly, yet how modestly, Lamb sought it.

TO MR. MANNING.

“Dear Manning,—The particular kindness, even up to a degree of attachment, which I have experienced from you, seems to claim some distinct acknowledgment on my part. I could not content myself with a bare remembrance to you, conveyed in some letter to Lloyd.

“Will it be agreeable to you, if I occasionally recruit your memory of me, which else must soon fade, if you consider the brief intercourse we have



had. I am not likely to prove a troublesome correspondent. My scribbling days are past. I shall have no sentiments to communicate, but as they spring up from some living and worthy occasion.

“ I look forwards with great pleasure to the performance of your promise, that we should meet in London early in the ensuing year. The century must needs commence auspiciously for me, that brings with it Manning’s friendship, as an earnest of its after gifts.

“ I should have written before, but for a troublesome inflammation in one of my eyes, brought on by night travelling with the coach windows sometimes up.

“ What more I have to say shall be reserved for a letter to Lloyd. I must not prove tedious to you in my first outside, lest I should affright you by my ill-judged loquacity.

“ I am,

“ Yours most sincerely,

“ C. LAMB.”

TO MR. MANNING.

“ Dear Manning,—Having suspended my correspondence a decent interval, as knowing that



even good things may be taken to satiety, a wish cannot but recur to learn whether you be still well and happy. Do all things continue in the state I left them in Cambridge?

“Do your night parties still flourish? and do you continue to bewilder your company, with your thousand faces, running down through all the keys of idiotism (like Lloyd over his perpetual harpsichord), from the smile and the glimmer of half-sense and quarter-sense, to the grin and hanging lip of Betty Foy’s own Johnny? And does the face-dissolving curfew sound at twelve? How unlike the great originals were your petty terrors in the postscript, not fearful enough to make a fairy shudder, or a Lilliputian fine lady, eight months full of child, miscarry. Yet one of them, which had more beast than the rest, I thought faintly resembled *one* of your brutifications. But, seriously, I long to see your own honest Manning-face again. I did not mean a pun,—your *man’s* face, you will be apt to say, I know your wicked will to pun. I cannot now write to Lloyd and you too, so you must convey as much interesting intelligence as this may contain, or be thought to contain, to him and Sophia, with my dearest love and remembrances.



“ By the by, I think you and Sophia both incorrect with regard to the *title* of the *play*\*. Allowing your objection (which is not necessary, as pride may be, and is in real life often, cured by misfortunes not directly originating from its own acts, as Jeremy Taylor will tell you a naughty desire is sometimes sent to cure it. I know you read these *practical divines*) but allowing your objection,—does not the betraying of his father’s secret directly spring from pride?—from the pride of wine and a full heart, and a proud overstepping of the ordinary rules of morality, and contempt of the prejudices of mankind, which are not to bind superior souls—‘ as *trust* in *the matter* of *secrets* all *ties* of *blood*, &c., &c., keeping of *promises*, the feeble mind’s religion, binding our *morning knowledge* to the performance of what *last night’s ignorance* spake’—does he not prate, that ‘ *Great Spirits*,’ must do more than die for their friend—does not the pride of wine incite him to display some evidence of friendship, which its own irregularity shall make great? This I know, that I meant his punishment not alone to be a cure for his daily and habitual *pride*, but the direct conse-

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\* It had been proposed to entitle John Woodvil “Pride’s Cure.”



quence and appropriate punishment of a particular act of pride.

“If you do not understand it so, it is my fault in not explaining my meaning.

“I have not seen Coleridge since, and scarcely expect to see him,—perhaps he has been at Cambridge.

“Need I turn over, to blot a fresh clean half-sheet? merely to say, what I hope you are sure of without my repeating it, that I would have you consider me, dear Manning,

“Your sincere friend,

“C. LAMB.”

Early in the following year (1800), Lamb, with his sister, removed to Chapel-street, Pentonville. In the summer he visited Coleridge, at Stowey, and spent a few delightful holidays in his society and that of Wordsworth, who then resided in the neighbourhood. This was the first opportunity Lamb had enjoyed of seeing much of the poet, who was destined to exercise a beneficial and lasting influence on the literature and moral sense of the opening century. At this time Lamb was scarcely prepared to sympathise with the naked simplicity of the “Lyrical Ballads,” which Wordsworth was prepar-



ing for the press. The "rich conceits" of the writers of Elizabeth's reign had been blended with his first love of poetry, and he could not at once acknowledge the serene beauty of a style in which language was only the stainless mirror of thought, and which sought no aid either from the grandeur of artificial life or the pomp of words. In after days he was among the most earnest of this great poet's admirers, and rejoiced as he found the scoffers who sneered at his bold experiment gradually owning his power. How he felt when the little golden opportunity of conversation with Wordsworth and Coleridge had passed will appear from the following letter, which seems to have been addressed to Coleridge shortly after his return to London.

## TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I am scarcely yet so reconciled to the loss of you, or so subsided into my wonted uniformity of feeling as to sit calmly down to think of you and write to you. But I reason myself into the belief that those few and pleasant holydays shall not have been spent in vain. I feel improvement in the recollection of many a casual conversation. The names of Tom Poole, of Wordsworth and his good



sister, with thine and Sarah's, are become 'familiar in my mouth as household words.' You would make me very happy, if you think W. has no objection, by transcribing for me that inscription of his. I have some scattered sentences ever floating on my memory, teasing me that I cannot remember more of it. You may believe I will make no improper use of it. Believe me I can think now of many subjects on which I had planned gaining information from you; but I forgot my 'treasure's worth' while I possessed it. Your leg is now become to me a matter of much more importance—and many a little thing, which when I was present with you seemed scarce to *indent* my notice, now presses painfully on my remembrance. Is the Patriot come yet? Are Wordsworth and his sister gone yet? I was looking out for John Thelwall all the way from Bridgewater, and had I met him, I think it would have moved me to tears. You will oblige me too by sending me my great coat, which I left behind in the oblivious state the mind is thrown into at parting—is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that great coat lingering so cunningly behind;—at present I have none—so send it me by a Stowey waggon, if there



be such a thing, directing for C. L. No. 45, Chapel-street, Pentonville, near London. But above all, *that Inscription!*—it will recall to me the tones of all your voices—and with them many a remembered kindness to one who could and can repay you all only by the silence of a grateful heart. I could not talk much, while I was with you, but my silence was not sullenness, nor I hope from any bad motive; but, in truth, disuse has made me awkward at it. I know I behaved myself, particularly at Tom Poole's, and at Cruikshank's, most like a sulky child; but company and converse are strange to me. It was kind in you all to endure me as you did.

“Are you and your dear Sarah—to me also very dear, because very kind—agreed yet about the management of little Hartley, and how go on the little rogue's teeth? I will see White to-morrow, and he shall send you information on that matter; but as perhaps I can do it as well after talking with him, I will keep this letter open.

“My love and thanks to you and all of you.

“C. L.”

“Wednesday Evening.”



Coleridge shortly after came to town, to make arrangements for his contributions to the daily press. The following note is addressed to him when in London.

## TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ Dear Coleridge,—Now I write, I cannot miss this opportunity of acknowledging the obligations myself, and the readers in general of that luminous paper, the “Morning Post,” are under to you for the very novel and exquisite manner in which you combined political with grammatical science, in your yesterday’s dissertation on Mr. Wyndham’s unhappy composition. It must have been the death blow to that ministry. I expect Pitt and Grenville to resign. More especially the delicate and Cottrellian grace with which you officiated, with a ferula for a white wand, as gentleman usher to the word “also,” which it seems did not know its place.

“ I expect Manning of Cambridge in town to-night—will you fulfil your promise of meeting him at my house? He is a man of a thousand. Give me a line to say what day, whether Saturday, Sunday, Monday, &c., and if Sarah and the Philosopher can come. I am afraid, if I did not at



intervals call upon you, I should *never see you*. But I forget, the affairs of the nation engross your time and your mind.

“Farewell,

“C. L.”

Coleridge afterwards spent some weeks with Lamb, as appears from the following letter:—

TO MR. MANNING.

“Dear Manning,—I am living in a continuous feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks, and the more I see of him in the quotidian undress and relaxation of his mind, the more cause I see to love him, and believe him a *very good man*, and all those foolish impressions to the contrary fly off like morning slumbers. He is engaged in translations, which, I hope, will keep him this month to come. He is uncommonly kind and friendly to me. He ferrets me day and night to *do something*. He tends me, amidst all his own worrying and heart-oppressing occupations, as a gardener tends his young *tulip*. Marry come up; what a pretty similitude, and how like your humble servant! He has lugged me to the brink of engaging to a newspaper, and has suggested to me



for a first plan, the forgery of a supposed manuscript of Burton the anatomist of melancholy. I have even written the introductory letter; and, if I can pick up a few guineas this way, I feel they will be most *refreshing*, bread being so dear. If I go on with it, I will apprise you of it, as you may like to see my things! and the *tulip*, of all flowers, loves to be admired most.

“Pray pardon me, if my letters do not come very thick. I am so taken up with one thing or other that I cannot pick out (I will not say time, but) fitting times to write to you. My dear love to Lloyd and Sophia, and pray split this thin letter into three parts, and present them with the *two biggest* in my name.

“They are my oldest friends; but, ever the new friend driveth out the old, as the ballad sings! God bless you all three! I would hear from Ll. if I could.

“C. L.

“Flour has just fallen nine shillings a sack! we shall be all too rich.

“Tell Charles I have seen his mamma, and have almost fallen in love with *her*, since I mayn't with Olivia. She is so fine and graceful, a complete matron-lady-quaker. She has given me two lit-



tle books. Olivia grows a charming girl—full of feeling, and thinner than she was ; but I have not time to fall in love.

“ Mary presents her *general compliments*. She keeps in fine health !”

Coleridge, during this visit, recommended Lamb to Mr. Daniel Stuart, then editor of the “ Morning Post,” as a writer of light articles, by which he might add something to an income, then barely sufficient for the decent support of himself and his sister. It would seem from his next letter to Manning, that he had made an offer to try his hand at some personal squibs, which, ultimately, was not accepted. Manning need not have feared that there would have been a particle of malice in them ! Lamb afterwards became a correspondent to the paper, and has recorded his experience of the misery of toiling after pleasantries in one of the “ Essays of Elia,” entitled “ Newspapers thirty-five years ago.”

TO MR. MANNING.

“ C. L.’s moral sense presents her compliments to Doctor Manning, is very thankful for his medical



advice, but is happy to add that her disorder has died of itself.

“Dr. Manning, Coleridge has left us, to go into the north, on a visit to his god, Wordsworth. With him have flown all my splendid prospects of engagement with the ‘Morning Post,’ all my visionary guineas, the deceitful wages of unborn scandal. In truth, I wonder you took it up so seriously. All my intention was but to make a little sport with such public and fair game as Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, Mrs. F——, the Devil, &c. —gentry dipped in Styx all over, whom no paper javelin-lings can touch. To have made free with these cattle, where was the harm? ’twould have been but giving a polish to lamp-black, not nigri-fying a negro primarily. After all, I cannot but regret my involuntary virtue. Hang virtue that’s thrust upon us; it behaves itself with such constraint, till conscience opens the window, and lets out the goose. I had struck off two imitations of Burton, quite abstracted from any modern allusions, which it was my intent only to engage in from time to time to make ’em popular.

“Stuart has got these, with an introductory letter; but, not hearing from him, I have ceased from



my labours, but I write to him to-day to get a final answer. I am afraid they won't do for a paper. Burton is a scarce gentleman, not much known, else I had done 'em pretty well.

"I have also hit off a few lines in the name of Burton, being a 'Conceit of Diabolic Possession.' Burton was a man often assailed by deepest melancholy, and at other times much given to laughing, and jesting, as is the way with melancholy men. I will send them you: they were almost extempore, and no great things; but you will indulge them. Robert Lloyd is come to town. Priscilla meditates going to see Pizzaro at Drury Lane to-night, (from her uncle's) under cover of coming to dine with me... *heu! tempora! heu! mores!* — I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute.

"Yours as usual,

"C. L."

The following is an extract from a letter addressed about this time to Manning, who had taken a view of a personal matter relating to a common friend of both, directly contrary to that of Lamb.



## TO MR. MANNING.

“ Rest you merry in your opinion ! Opinion is a species of property ; and though I am always desirous to share with my friend to a certain extent, I shall ever like to keep some tenets, and some property, properly my own. Some day, Manning, when we meet, substituting Croydon and fair Amaryllis, for — and —, we will discuss together this question of moral feeling, ‘ In what cases, and how far sincerity is a virtue ? ’ I do not mean Truth, a good Olivia-like creature, God bless her, who, meaning no offence, is always ready to give an answer when she is asked why she did so and so ; but a certain forward-talking half-brother of hers, Sincerity, that amphibious gentleman, who is so ready to perk up his obnoxious sentiments unasked into your notice, as Midas would do his ears into your face uncalled for. But I despair of doing anything by a letter in the way of explaining or coming to explanations. A good wish, or a pun, or a piece of secret history, may be well enough that way conveyed ; nay, it has been known, that intelligence of a turkey hath been conveyed by that medium, without much



ambiguity.—Godwin I am a good deal pleased with. He is a very well-behaved, pleasant man, nothing very brilliant about his conversation, or imposing, as you may suppose ; quite another guess sort of gentleman from what your Anti-jacobin Christians imagine him. I was well pleased to find he has neither horns nor claws ; quite a tame creature, I assure you. A middle-sized man, in stature ; whereas, from his noisy fame, you would expect to find a Briareus Centimanus, or a Tityus tall enough to pull Jupiter from his heavens.

“ Pray, is it a part of your sincerity to show my letters to Lloyd ? for, really, gentlemen ought to explain their virtues upon a first acquaintance, to prevent mistakes.

“ God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifling* ; and believe me, seriously and deeply,

“ Your well-wisher and friend,

“ C. L.”

The following letter was addressed to Coleridge shortly after he had left London on a visit to Wordsworth, who, in the mean time, had settled on the borders of Grasmere.



## TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ Dear Coleridge,—I have taken to-day, and delivered to L. & Co., imprimis, your books, viz. three ponderous German dictionaries, one volume (I can find no more) of German and French ditto, sundry other German books unbound, as you left them, ‘Percy’s Ancient Poetry,’ and one volume of ‘Anderson’s Poets.’ I specify them, that you may not lose any. *Secundo*, a dressing-gown (value, five-pence) in which you used to sit and look like a conjuror, when you were translating Wallenstein. A case of two razors, and a shaving-box and strap. This it has cost me a severe struggle to part with. They are in a brown-paper parcel, which also contains sundry papers and poems, sermons, *some few Epic Poems*, —one about Cain and Abel, which came from Poole, &c. &c. and also your tragedy; with one or two small German books, and that drama in which Got-fader performs Tertio; a small oblong box containing *all your letters*, collected from all your waste papers, and which fill the said little box. All other waste papers, which I judged worth sending, are in the paper-parcel aforesaid. But you will find *all your letters* in the box by themselves . . . Thus, have I discharged my



conscience and my lumber-room of all your property, save and except a folio entitled 'Tyrrell's Bibliotheca Politica,' which you used to learn your politics out of when you wrote for the 'Post,' *mutatis mutandis*, i. e. applying past inferences to modern *data*. I retain that, because I am sensible I am very deficient in the politics myself; and I have torn up—don't be angry, waste paper has risen forty per cent. and I can't afford to buy it—all 'Buonaparte's Letters,' 'Arthur Young's Treatise on Corn,' and one or two more light-armed infantry, which I thought better suited the flippancy of London discussion, than the dignity of Keswick thinking. Mary says you will be in a passion about them, when you come to miss them; but you must study philosophy. Read 'Albertus Magnus de Chartis Amissis' five times over after phlebotomizing,—'tis Burton's recipe—and then be angry with an absent friend if you can. Sara is obscure. Am I to understand by her letter, that she sends a *kiss* to Eliza B——? Pray tell your wife that a note of interrogation on the superscription of a letter is highly ungrammatical—she proposes writing my name *Lamb*? *Lambe* is quite enough. I have had the Anthology, and like only one thing in it, *Lewti*; but of that the last stanza



is detestable, the rest most exquisite!—the epithet *enviable* would dash the finest poem. For God's sake, (I never was more serious) don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses. It did well enough five years ago when I came to see you, and was moral coxcomb enough at the time you wrote the lines, to feed upon such epithets; but, besides that, the meaning of gentle is equivocal at best, and almost always means poor-spirited; the very quality of gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpeting. My *sentiment* is long since vanished. I hope my *virtues* have done *sucking*. I can scarce think but you meant it in joke. I hope you did, for I should be ashamed to think you could think to gratify me by such praise, fit only to be a cordial to some green-sick sonneteer\*.

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\* This refers to a poem of Coleridge's, composed in 1797 and published in the Anthology of the year 1800, under the title of "This Lime-tree Bower my Prison," addressed to "Charles Lamb, of the India House, London," in which Lamb is thus apostrophised, as taking more pleasure in the country than Coleridge's other visitors—a compliment which even then he scarcely merited:—

“ — But thou, methinks most glad,  
My gentle-hearted Charles! For thou hast pin'd  
And linger'd after nature many a year,  
In the great city pent.”

&c.



“ I have hit off the following in imitation of old English poetry, which, I imagine, I am a dab at. The measure is unmeasureable; but it most resembles that beautiful ballad the Old and Young Courtier; and in its feature of taking the extremes of two situations for just parallel, it resembles the old poetry certainly. If I could but stretch out the circumstances to twelve more verses, *i. e.* if I had as much genius as the writer of that old song, I think it would be excellent. It was to follow an imitation of Burton in prose, which you have not seen. But fate ‘and wisest Stewart’ say No\*.

“ I can send you 200 pens and six quires of paper *immediately*, if they will answer the carriage by coach. It would be foolish to pack ’em up *cum multis libris et cæteris*,—they would all spoil. I only wait your commands to coach them. I would pay five-and-forty thousand carriages to read W.’s tragedy, of which I have heard so much and seen so little—only what I saw at Stowey. Pray give me an order in writing on Longman for “Lyrical Ballads.” I have the first volume, and, truth to

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\* The quaint and pathetic poem, entitled “A Ballad, noticing the difference of rich and poor, in the ways of a rich noble’s palace and a poor workhouse.”



tell, six shillings is a broad shot. I cram all I can in, to save a multiplying of letters,—those pretty comets with swinging tails.

“ I’ll just crowd in God bless you !

“ Wednesday Night, 6th Aug. 1800.”

“ John Woodvil” was now printed, although not published till a year afterwards; probably withheld in the hope of its representation on the stage. A copy was sent to Coleridge for Wordsworth, with the following letter, or cluster of letters, written at several times. The ladies referred to, in the exquisite description of Coleridge’s blue-stockings friends, are beyond the reach of feeling its application; nor will it be detected by the most apprehensive of their surviving friends.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ I send you, in this parcel, my play, which I beg you to present in my name, with my respect and love, to Wordsworth and his sister. You blame us for giving your direction to Miss W——; the woman has been ten times after us about it, and we gave it her at last, under the idea that no further harm would ensue, but she would *once* write to you, and you would bite your lips and forget to answer



it, and so it would end. You read us a dismal homily upon "Realities." We know, quite as well as you do, what are shadows and what are realities. You, for instance, when you are over your fourth or fifth jorum, chirping about old school occurrences, are the best of realities. Shadows are cold, thin things, that have no warmth or grasp in them. Miss W——, and her friend, and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here daily, and, in defect of you, hive and cluster upon us, are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey, Miss W——, to dance after you, in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical Anthology. We have pretty well shaken her off, by that simple expedient of referring her to you; but there are more burrs in the wind. I came home t'other day from business, hungry as a hunter, to dinner, with nothing, I am sure, of *the author but hunger* about me, and whom found I closeted with Mary but a friend of this Miss W——, one Miss B——e, or B——y; I don't know how she spells her name. I just came in time enough, I believe, luckily to prevent them from exchanging vows of eternal friendship. It seems she is one of your authoresses, that you first foster, and then upbraid us with. But I forgive you. 'The rogue has given me potions to



make me love him.' Well; go she would not, nor step a step over our threshold, till we had promised to come and drink tea with her next night. I had not seen her before, and could not tell who it was that was so familiar. We went, however, not to be impolite. Her lodgings are up two pair of stairs in —— Street. Tea and coffee, and macaroons—a kind of cake I much love. We sat down. Presently Miss B—— broke the silence, by declaring herself quite of a different opinion from *D'Israeli*, who supposes the differences of human intellect to be the mere effect of organization. She begged to know my opinion. I attempted to carry it off with a pun upon organ, but that went off very flat. She immediately conceived a very low opinion of my metaphysics; and, turning round to Mary, put some question to her in French,—possibly having heard that neither Mary nor I understood French. The explanation that took place occasioned some embarrassment and much wondering. She then fell into an insulting conversation about the comparative genius and merits of all modern languages, and concluded with asserting that the Saxon was esteemed the purest dialect in Germany. From thence she passed into the subject of poetry; where I, who had hitherto sat mute,



and an hearer only, humbly hoped I might now put in a word to some advantage, seeing that it was my own trade in a manner. But I was stopped by a round assertion, that no good poetry had appeared since Dr. Johnson's time. It seems the Doctor has suppressed many hopeful geniuses that way, by the severity of his critical strictures in his 'Lives of the Poets.' I here ventured to question the fact, and was beginning to appeal to *names*, but I was assured 'it was certainly the case.' Then we discussed Miss More's book on education, which I had never read. It seems Dr. Gregory, another of Miss B——'s friends, has found fault with one of Miss More's metaphors. Miss More has been at some pains to vindicate herself,—in the opinion of Miss B——, not without success. It seems the Doctor is invariably against the use of broken or mixed metaphor, which he reprobates, against the authority of Shakspeare himself. We next discussed the question, whether Pope was a poet? I find Dr. Gregory is of opinion he was not, though Miss Seward does not at all concur with him in this. We then sat upon the comparative merits of the ten translations of 'Pizarro,' and Miss B—— advised Mary to take two of them home; she thought it might afford her some pleasure to compare them



*verbatim*: which we declined. It being now nine o'clock, wine and macaroons were again served round, and we parted, with a promise to go again next week, and meet the Miss Porters, who, it seems, have heard much of Mr. Coleridge, and wish to meet *us*, because we are *his* friends. I have been preparing for the occasion. I crowd cotton in my ears. I read all the reviews and magazines of the past month, against the dreadful meeting, and I hope by these means to cut a tolerable second-rate figure.

“Pray let us have no more complaints about shadows. We are in a fair way, *through you*, to surfeit sick upon them.

“Our loves and respects to your host and hostess.

“Take no thought about your proof sheets; they shall be done as if Woodfall himself did them. Pray send us word of Mrs. Coleridge and little David Hartley, your little reality.

“Farewell, dear Substance. Take no umbrage at any thing I have written.

“C. LAMB,

“*Umbra.*

“Land of Shadows,

Shadow-month the 16th or 17th, 1800.”



“Coleridge, I find loose among your papers a copy of *Christabel*. It wants about thirty lines; you will very much oblige me by sending me the beginning as far as that line,—

‘And the spring comes slowly up this way;’

and the intermediate lines between—

‘The lady leaps up suddenly,  
The lovely Lady *Christabel* ;’

and the lines,—

‘She folded her arms beneath her cloak,  
And stole to the other side of the oak.’

The trouble to you *will be small*, and the benefit to us *very great*! A pretty antithesis! A figure in speech I much applaud.

“Godwin has called upon us. He spent one evening here. Was very friendly. Kept us up till midnight. Drank punch, and talk’d about you. He seems, above all men, mortify’d at your going away. Suppose you were to write to that good-natured heathen :

‘Or is he a *shadow*?’

“If I do not *write*, impute it to the long postage,



of which you have so much cause to complain. I have scribbled over a *queer letter*, as I find by perusal, but it means no mischief.

“I am, and will be, yours ever, in sober sadness,

“C. L.”

“Write your *German* as plain as sunshine, for that must correct itself. You know I am homo unius linguæ; in English, illiterate, a dunce, a ninny.”

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“How do you like this little epigram? It is not my writing, nor had I any finger in it. If you concur with me in thinking it very elegant and very original, I shall be tempted to name the author to you. I will just hint that it is almost or quite a first attempt.

[Here Miss Lamb's little poem of Helen was introduced.]

“By-the-by, I have a sort of recollection that



somebody, I think *you*, promis'd me a sight of Wordsworth's Tragedy. I should be very glad of it just now; for I have got Manning with me, and should like to read it *with him*. But this, I confess, is a refinement. Under any circumstances, alone, in Cold-Bath prison, or in the desert island, just when Prospero and his crew had set off, with Caliban in a cage, to Milan, it would be a treat to me to read that play. Manning has read it, so has Lloyd, and all Lloyd's family; but I could not get him to betray his trust by giving *me* a sight of it. Lloyd is sadly deficient in some of those virtuous vices.

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“George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with. The oftener I see him the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair.”

The tragedy which Lamb was thus anxious to read, has been perseveringly withheld from the world. A fine passage, quoted in one of Words-



word's prose essays, makes us share in his earnest curiosity:—

“ Action is momentary—

A word, a blow—the motion of a muscle this way or that;  
Suffering is long, drear, and infinite.”

Wordsworth's genius is perhaps more fitly employed in thus tracing out the springs of heroic passion, and developing the profound elements of human character, than in following them out through their exhibition in violent contest or majestic repose. Surely he may *now* afford to gratify the world!

The next is a short but characteristic letter to Manning.

TO MR. MANNING.

“ My dear fellow, (N.B. mighty familiar of late!) for me to come to Cambridge now is one of Heaven's impossibilities. Metaphysicians tell us, even it can work nothing which implies a contradiction. I can explain this by telling you that I am engaged to do double duty (this hot weather!) for a man who has taken advantage of this very weather to go and



cool himself in 'green retreats' all the month of August.

"But for you to come to London instead!—muse upon it, revolve it, cast it about in your mind. I have a bed at your command. You shall drink rum, brandy, gin, aquavitæ, usquebaugh, or whiskey a' nights; and for the after dinner-trick, I have eight bottles of genuine port, which, mathematically divided, gives  $1\frac{1}{7}$  for every day you stay, provided you stay a week. Hear John Milton sing,

'Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause.'

*Twenty-first Sonnet.*

And elsewhere,—

'What neat repast shall feast us, light\* and choice,  
Of Attic taste, with wine†, whence we may rise  
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice  
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?'

"Indeed the poets are full of this pleasing mortality,—

'Veni cite, Domine Manning!'

"Think upon it. Excuse the paper, it is all I have.

"C. LAMB."

\* "We, poets! generally give *light* dinners."

† "No doubt the poet here alludes to port-wine at 38s. the dozen."



Lamb now meditated a removal to the home-place of his best and most solemn thoughts—the Temple ; and thus announced it in a letter to Manning.

## TO MR. MANNING.

“ You masters of logic ought to know (logic is nothing more than a knowledge of *words*, as the Greek etymon implies), that all words are no more to be taken in a literal sense at all times than a promise given to a tailor. When I exprest an apprehension that you were mortally offended, I meant no more than by the application of a certain formula of efficacious sounds, which had *done* in similar cases before, to rouse a sense of decency in you, and a remembrance of what was due to me ! You masters of logic should advert to this phenomenon in human speech, before you arraign the usage of us dramatic geniuses. Imagination is a good blood mare, and goes well ; but the misfortune is, she has too many paths before her. ’Tis true I might have imaged to myself, that you had trundled your frail carcass to Norfolk. I might also and did imagine, that you had not, but that you were lazy, or inventing new properties in a triangle, and for that purpose moulding and squeez-



ing Landlord Crisp's three-corner'd beaver into fantastic experimental forms; or, that Archimedes was meditating to repulse the French, in case of a Cambridge invasion, by a geometric hurling of folios on their red caps; or, peradventure, that you were in extremities, in great wants, and just set out for Trinity-boys when my letters came. In short, my genius! (which is a short word now-a-days, for what-a-great-man-am-I!) was absolutely stifled and overlaid with its own riches. Truth is one and poor, like the cruise of Elijah's widow. Imagination is the bold face that multiplies its oil; and thou, the old crack'd pipkin, that could not believe it could be put to such purposes. Dull pipkin, to have Elijah for thy cook. Imbecile recipient, of so fat a miracle. I send you George Dyer's Poems, the richest production of the lyrical muse *this century* can boast; for Wordsworth's L. B. were published, or at least written, before Christmas.

“Please to advert to pages 291 to 276 for the most astonishing account of where Shakspeare's muse has been all this while. I thought she had been dead, and buried in Stratford Church, with the young man *that kept her company*,—



‘ But it seems, like the Devil,  
Buried in Cole Harbour,  
Some say she’s risen again,  
Gone ’prentice to a Barber.

“ N. B.—I don’t charge any thing for the additional manuscript notes, which are the joint productions of myself and a learned translator of Schiller, —— Stoddart, Esq.

“ N. B. the 2d.—I should not have blotted your book, but I had sent my own out to be bound, as I was in duty bound. A liberal criticism upon the several pieces, lyrical, heroical, amatory, and satirical, would be acceptable. So, some think there’s not a Words—worth of good poetry in the Great L. B.! I daren’t put the dreaded syllables at their just length, for my *back* tingles from the northern castigation.

“ I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at our Lady’s next feast. I have partly fixed upon most delectable rooms, which look out (when you stand a tip-toe) over the Thames, and Surrey Hills; at the upper end of King’s Bench walks, in the Temple. There I shall have all the privacy of a house without the encumbrance, and shall be able to lock my friends out as often as I desire to hold



free converse with my immortal mind, for my present lodgings resemble a minister's levee, I have so increased my acquaintance (as they call 'em) since I resided in town. Like the town mouse, that had tasted a little of urbane manners, I long to be nibbling my own cheese by my dear self, without mouse-traps and time-traps. By my new plan, I shall be as airy, up four pair of stairs, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of enchanting, more than Mahometan paradise, London, whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. O! her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toy-shops, mercers, hardwaremen, pastry-cooks! St. Paul's church-yard, the Strand! Exeter Change! Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse! These are thy gods, O London! An't you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam? Had not you better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least, I know an alchymy that turns her mud into that metal,—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds.



“ ’Tis half-past twelve o’clock, and all sober people ought to be a-bed.

“ C. LAMB (as you may guess).”

The following two letters appear to have been written during Coleridge’s visit to Wandsworth.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ By some fatality, unusual with me, I have mislaid the list of books which you want. Can you, from memory, easily supply me with another?

“ I confess to Statius, and I detained him wilfully, out of a reverend regard to your style. Statius, they tell me, is turgid. As to that other Latin book, since you know neither its name nor subject, your wants (I crave leave to apprehend) cannot be very urgent. Meanwhile, dream that it is one of the lost Decades of Livy.

“ Your particularity to me has led you to form an erroneous opinion as to the measure of delight you suppose me to take in obliging. Pray, be careful that it spread no further. ’Tis one of those heresies that is very pregnant. Pray, rest more satisfied with the portion of learning which you have got, and disturb my peaceful ignorance as little as possible with such sort of commissions.



“Did you never observe an appearance well known by the name of the man in the moon? Some scandalous old maids have set on foot a report, that it is Endymion.

“Your theory about the first awkward step a man makes being the consequence of learning to dance, is not universal. We have known many youths bred up at Christ’s, who never learned to dance, yet the world imputes to them no very graceful motions. I remember there was little Hudson, the immortal precentor of St. Paul’s, to teach us our quavers; but, to the best of my recollection, there was no master of motions when we were at Christ’s.

“Farewell, in haste.

“C. L.”

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

“Dear Wordsworth,—I have not forgot your commissions. But the truth is,—and why should I not confess it?—I am not plethorically abounding in cash at this present. Merit, Heaven knows, is very little rewarded; but it does not become me to speak of myself. My motto is, ‘contented with little, yet wishing for more.’ Now, the books you



wish for would require some pounds, which, I am sorry to say, I have not by me ; so, I will say at once, if you will give me a draft upon your town banker for any sum you propose to lay out, I will dispose of it to the very best of my skill in choice old books, such as my own soul loveth. In fact, I have been waiting for the liquidation of a debt to enable myself to set about your commission handsomely ; for it is a scurvy thing to cry, ‘Give me the money first,’ and I am the first of the family of the Lambs that have done it for many centuries : but the debt remains as it was, and my old friend that I accommodated has generously forgot it ! The books which you want, I calculate at about £8. Ben Johnson is a guinea book. Beaumont and Fletcher, in folio, the right folio not now to be met with ; the octavos are about £3. As to any other dramatists, I do not know where to find them, except what are in Dodsley’s old plays, which are about £3 also. Massinger I never saw but at one shop, but it is now gone ; but one of the editions of Dodsley contains about a fourth (the best) of his plays. Congreve, and the rest of King Charles’ moralists, are cheap and accessible. The works on Ireland I will enquire after, but, I fear, Spenser’s is not to be had apart from his poems ; I



never saw it. But you may depend upon my sparing no pains to furnish you as complete a library of old poets and dramatists as will be prudent to buy; for, I suppose you do not include the £20 edition of Hamlet, single play, which Kemble has. Marlow's plays and poems are totally vanished; only one edition of Dodsley retains one, and the other two of his plays: but John Ford is the man after Shakspeare. Let me know your will and pleasure soon, for I have observed, next to the pleasure of buying a bargain for one's self, is the pleasure of persuading a friend to buy it. It tickles one with the image of an imprudency, without the penalty usually annexed.

“C. LAMB.”



## CHAPTER VI.

[1800.]

LETTERS TO MANNING, AFTER LAMB'S REMOVAL  
TO THE TEMPLE.

IN the year 1800, Lamb carried into effect his purpose of removing to Mitre-court Buildings, Temple. During this time he wrote only a few small poems, which he transmitted to Manning. In his letters to Manning a vein of wild humour breaks out, of which there are but slight indications in the correspondence with his more sentimental friends; as if the very opposition of Manning's more scientific power to his own force of sympathy provoked the sallies which the genial kindness of the mathematician fostered. The prodigal and reckless humour of some of these letters forms a striking contrast to



the deep feeling of the earlier letters to Coleridge. His 'Essays of Elia' show the harmonious union of both. The following letter contains Lamb's description of his new abode.

## TO MR. MANNING.

"I was not aware that you owed me any thing beside that guinea; but I dare say you are right. I live at No. 16, Mitre-court Buildings, a pistol-shot off Baron Maseres'. You must introduce me to the Baron. I think we should suit one another mainly. He lives on the ground floor, for convenience of the gout; I prefer the attic story, for the air! He keeps three footmen and two maids; I have neither maid nor laundress, not caring to be troubled with them! His forte, I understand, is the higher mathematics; my turn, I confess, is more to poetry and the belles lettres. The very antithesis of our characters would make up a harmony. You must bring the Baron and me together.—N.B. when you come to see me, mount up to the top of the stairs—I hope you are not asthmatical—and come in flannel, for it's pure airy up there. And bring your glass, and I will show you the Surrey Hills. My bed faces the river, so as



by perking up upon my haunches, and supporting my carcass with my elbows, without much wrying my neck, I can see the white sails glide by the bottom of the King's Bench walks as I lie in my bed. An excellent tiptoe prospect in the best room;—casement windows, with small panes, to look more like a cottage. Mind, I have got no bed for you, that's flat; sold it to pay expenses of moving. The very bed on which Manning lay; the friendly, the mathematical Manning! How forcibly does it remind me of the interesting Otway! 'The very bed which on thy marriage night gave thee into the arms of Belvidera, by the coarse hand of ruffians,' (upholsterers' men,) &c. My tears will not give me leave to go on. But a bed I will get you, Manning, on condition you will be my day guest.

“I have been ill more than a month, with a bad cold, which comes upon me (like a murderer's conscience) about midnight, and vexes me for many hours. I have successively been drugg'd with Spanish licorice, opium, ipecacuanha, paregoric, and tincture of foxglove, (*tinctura purpuræ digitalis* of the ancients.) I am afraid I must leave off drinking.”

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Lamb then gives an account of his visit to an exhibition of snakes—of a frightful vividness and interesting—as all details of these fascinating reptiles are, whom we at once loathe and long to look upon, as the old enemies and tempters of our race.

TO MR. MANNING.

“ Dear Manning,—Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction ; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers ; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *feverites*. And, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise, with the sincerity of Saint Peter, and the contrition of sinner Peter if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go no where till I have been at Cambridge. No matter if you are in



a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not libraries, halls, colleges, books, pictures, statues? I wish you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which could not have escaped *your genius*,—a live rattlesnake, ten feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candlelight. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all mansions of *snakes*,—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds; and immediately a stranger enters, (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me



with his toad-mouth wide open: the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box, and just behind, a little devil, not an inch from my back, had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars ! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror; but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his cursed mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

“ I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of ‘ The Farmer's Boy.’ I thought it rather childish. No doubt, there is



originality in it, (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models, in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them,) but no *selection*. *All* is described.

“ Mind, I have only heard read one book.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ Philo-Snake,

“ C. L.”

The following are fragments from a letter chiefly on personal matters, the interest of which is gone by:—

TO MR. MANNING.

“ And now, when shall I catch a glimpse of your honest face-to-face countenance again? Your fine *dogmatical, sceptical* face by punch-light? O! one glimpse of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of this cold, thin correspondence; yea, of more worth, than all the letters that have sweated the fingers of sensibility, from Madame Sévigné to Sterne and Shenstone.

“ Coleridge is settled with his wife and the young philosopher at Keswick, with the Words-



worths. They have contrived to spawn a new volume of lyrical ballads, which is to see the light in about a month, and causes no little excitement in the *literary world*. George Dyer too, that good-natured poet, is more than nine months gone with his twin volumes of ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, Spenserian, Horatian, Akensidish, and Masonic verse—Clio prosper the birth! it will be twelve shillings out of somebody's pocket. Well, God put it into the hearts of the English gentry to come in shoals and subscribe to his poems, for He never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's!

“ Now farewell, for dinner is at hand.

“ C. L.”

Lamb had engaged to spend a few days, when he could obtain leave, with Manning at Cambridge, and, just as he hoped to accomplish his wish, received an invitation from Lloyd to give his holiday to the poets assembled at the Lakes. In the joyous excitement of spirits which the anticipated visit to Manning produced, he thus plays off Manning's proposal on his friend, abuses mountains, and luxuriates in his love of London:—



## TO MR. MANNING.

“ Dear Manning,— I have received a very kind invitation from Lloyd and Sophia, to go and spend a month with them at the lakes. Now it fortunately happens, (which is so seldom the case !) that I have spare cash by me, enough to answer the expenses of so long a journey ; and I am determined to get away from the office by some means. The purpose of this letter is to request of you (my dear friend,) that you will not take it unkind, if I decline my proposed visit to Cambridge *for the present*. Perhaps I shall be able to take Cambridge *in my way*, going or coming. I need not describe to you the expectations which such an one as myself, pent up all my life in a dirty city, have formed of a tour to the lakes. Consider, Grassmere ! Ambleside ! Wordsworth ! Coleridge ! Hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the eternal devil. I will eat snipes with thee, Thomas Manning. Only confess, confess a *bite*.

“ P.S. I think you named the 16th ; but was it not modest of Lloyd to send such an invitation ! It shows his knowledge of *money* and *time*. I would be loath to think, he meant



‘ Ironie satire sidelong sklentend on my poor pursie.’

BURNS.

For my part, with reference to my friends northward, I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature*. The earth, and sea, and sky (when all is said,) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation, if they can talk sensibly, and feel properly, I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass, (that strained my friend's purse strings in the purchase) nor his five-shilling print over the mantel-piece of old Nabbs the carrier, (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world; eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, (you may know them by their gait,) lamps lit at night, pastry-cook and silver-smith shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with



bucks reeling home drunk ; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of fire ; and stop thief ; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and but-teries, just like Cambridge colleges ; old book-stalls, ‘ Jeremy Taylors,’ ‘ Burtons on Melancholy,’ and ‘ Religio Medicis,’ on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London ! with-the-many-sins. O city, abounding in ——, for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang !

“ C. L.”

On this occasion Lamb was disappointed ; but he was consoled by the acquisition of a new friend, in Mr. Rickman of the House of Commons, and exults in a strain which he never had reason to regret. This piece of rare felicity enabled him even to bear the loss of his manuscripts, and the delay of his hopes ; which, according to the old theatrical usage, he was destined to endure.

TO MR. MANNING.

“ *Ecquid meditatur Archimedes ?* What is Euclid doing ? What hath happened to learned Trismegist ?—doth he take it in ill part, that his humble



friend did not comply with his courteous invitation? Let it suffice, I could not come—are impossibilities nothing?—be they abstractions of the intellect?—or not (rather) most sharp and mortifying realities? nuts in the Will's mouth too hard for her to crack? brick and stone walls in her way, which she can by no means eat through? sore lets, *impedimenta viarum*, no thoroughfares? *racemimium alte pendentes*? Is the phrase classic? I allude to the grapes in Æsop, which cost the fox a strain, and gained the world an aphorism. Observe the superscription of this letter. In adapting the size of the letters which constitute *your* name and Mr. *Crisp's* name respectively, I had an eye to your different stations in life. 'Tis truly curious, and must be soothing to an *aristocrat*. I wonder it has never been hit on before my time. I have made an acquisition latterly of a *pleasant hand*, one Rickman, to whom I was introduced by —, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another—George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian law, or common property, in matter of society; but for once he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui* may



light you home. This Rickman lives in our Buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about nine or ten o'clock—cold bread and cheese time—just in the *wishing* time of the night, when you *wish* for somebody to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable anybody. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious, nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand; a fine rattling fellow, has gone through life laughing at solemn apes;—himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter of fact to Xenophon and Plato—can talk Greek with Porson, politics with Thelwall, conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and any thing with anybody; a great farmer, somewhat concerned in an agricultural magazine—reads no poetry but Shakspeare, very intimate with Southey, loves George Dyer, thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous, wherever found, understands the *first time* (a great desideratum in common minds)—you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion; *up* to any thing; *down* to every thing; whatever *sapit hominem*. A



perfect *man*. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me to a little trouble to *select* ! only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant hand*. You must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one. A new class. An exotic, any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden-pot. The clearest-headed fellow. Fullest of matter, with least verbosity. If there be any alloy in my fortune to have met with such a man, it is that he commonly divides his time between town and country, having some foolish family ties at Christchurch, by which means he can only gladden our London hemisphere with returns of light. He is now going for six weeks."

"At last I have written to Kemble, to know the event of my play, which was presented last Christmas. As I suspected, came an answer back that the copy was lost, and could not be found—no hint that any body had to this day ever looked into it—with a courteous (reasonable !) request of another copy (if I had one by me,) and a promise of a definitive answer in a week. I could not resist so facile and moderate demand, so scribbled out another, omitting sundry things, such as the witch



story, about half of the forest scene (which is leisurely for story,) and transposing that soliloquy about England getting drunk, which, like its reciter, stupidly stood alone, nothing prevenient or antevenient—and cleared away a good deal besides, and sent this copy, written *all out* (with alterations, &c. *requiring judgment*) in one day and a half! I sent it last night, and am in weekly expectation of the tolling bell, and death-warrant.

“This is all my London news. Send me some from the *banks* of *Cam*, as the poets delight to speak, especially —, who has no other name, nor idea, nor definition of Cambridge,—namely, its being a market town, sending members to Parliament, never entered into his definition—it was and is, simply, the banks of the Cam, or the fair Cam; as Oxford is the banks of the Isis, or the fair Isis. Yours in all humility, most illustrious Trismegist,

“C. LAMB.

“ (Read on, there's more at the bottom.)

“You ask me about the ‘Farmer's Boy’—don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker) has a poor mind? Don't you find he is



always silly about *poor Giles* and those abject kind of phrases, which mark a man that looks up to wealth? None of Burns's poet dignity. What do you think? I have just opened him; but he makes me sick."

Here is a short but characteristic instance of the humour of the time.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dear Archimedes,— Things have gone on badly with thy ungeometrical friend; but they are on the turn. My old housekeeper has showed signs of convalescence, and will shortly resume the power of the keys, so I shan't be cheated of my tea and liquors. Wind in the west, which promotes tranquillity. Have leisure now to anticipate seeing thee again. Have been taking leave of tobacco in a rhyming address. Had thought *that vein* had long since closed up. Find I can rhyme and reason too. Think of studying mathematics, to restrain the fire of my genius, which G. D. recommends. Have frequent bleedings at the nose, which shows plethoric. Maybe shall try the sea



myself, that great scene of wonders. Got incredibly sober and regular : shave oftener, and hum a tune, to signify cheerfulness and gallantry.

“ Suddenly disposed to sleep, having taken a quart of peas with bacon, and stout. Will not refuse Nature, who has done such things for me !

“ Nurse ! don’t call me unless Mr. Manning comes.—What ! the gentleman in spectacles ?—Yes.

“ *Dormit.*

“ C. L.

“ Saturday,  
“ Hot Noon.”

Constant to the fame of Jem White, Lamb did not fail to enlist Manning among the admirers of the “ Falstaff’s Letter.” The next letter, referring to them is, however, more interesting for the light which it casts on Lamb’s indifference to the politics of the time, and fond devotion to the past.

TO MR. MANNING.

“ I hope by this time you are prepared to say, the ‘ Falstaff’s Letters’ are a bundle of the sharpest,



queerest, profoundest humours, of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned. I should have advertised you, that the meaning is frequently hard to be got at; and so are the future guineas, that now lie ripening and aurifying in the womb of some undiscovered Potosi; but dig, dig, dig, dig, Manning! I set to, with an unconquerable propulsion to write, with a lamentable want of what to write. My private goings on are orderly as the movements of the spheres, and stale as their music to angels' ears. Public affairs—except as they touch upon me, and so turn into private,—I cannot whip up my mind to feel any interest in. I grieve, indeed, that War, and Nature, and Mr. Pitt, that hangs up in Lloyd's best parlour, should have conspired to call up three necessities, simple commoners as our fathers knew them, into the upper house of luxuries; bread, and beer, and coals, Manning. But as to France and Frenchmen, and the Abbe Sieyes and his constitutions, I cannot make these present times present to me. I read histories of the past, and I live in them; although, to abstract senses, they are far less momentous, than the noises which keep Europe awake. I am reading 'Burnet's own Times.' Did



you ever read that garrulous, pleasant history? He tells his story like an old man past political service, bragging to his sons on winter evenings of the part he took in public transactions, when 'his old cap was new.' Full of scandal, which all true history is. No palliatives; but all the stark wickedness, that actually gives the *momentum* to national actors. Quite the prattle of age, and out-lived importance. Truth and sincerity staring out upon you perpetually in *alto rilievo*. Himself a party man—he makes you a party man. None of the cursed philosophical Humeian indifference, so cold and unnatural and inhuman! None of the cursed Gibbonian fine writing, so fine and composite. None of Dr. Robertson's periods with three members. None of Mr. Roscoe's sage remarks, all so apposite, and coming in so clever, lest the reader should have had the trouble of drawing an inference. Burnet's good old prattle I can bring present to my mind; I can make the revolution present to me—the French revolution, by a converse perversity in my nature, I fling as far *from* me. To quit this tiresome subject, and to relieve you from two or three dismal yawns, which I hear in spirit, I here conclude my more than



commonly obtuse letter; dull, up to the dullness of a Dutch commentator on Shakspeare.

“ My love to Lloyd and to Sophia.

“ C. L.”

While Lamb's dramatic destinies were in suspense, he was called on “to assist” at the production of a tragedy, by a friend, whose more mature reputation gave him readier access to the manager, but who had no better claim to success than himself. Mr. Godwin, whose powerful romance of *Caleb Williams* had supplied the materials for “*The Iron Chest*” of Colman, naturally aspired, on his own account, to the glory of the scene, and completed a tragedy under the title of “*Antonio, or the Soldier's Return*,” which was accepted at Drury-Lane Theatre, and announced for representation on Saturday, the 13th December, in this year. Lamb supplied the epilogue, which he copied in the following letter addressed to Manning on the eventful day :—



## TO MR. MANNING.

“ I have received your letter *this moment*, not having been at the office. I have just time to scribble down the epilogue. To your epistle I will just reply, that I will certainly come to Cambridge before January is out : I ’ll come *when I can*. You shall have an emended copy of my play early next week. Mary thanks you ; but her hand-writing is too feminine to be exposed to a Cambridge gentleman, though I endeavour to persuade her that you understand algebra, and must understand her hand. The play is the man’s you wot of ; but for Heaven’s sake do not mention it—it is to come out in a feigned name, as one Tobin’s. I will omit the introductory lines which connect it with the play, and give you the concluding tale, which is the mass and bulk of the epilogue. The *name* is *Jack INCIDENT*. It is about promise-breaking—you will see it all, if you read the *papers*.

Jack, of dramatic genius justly vain,  
Purchas’d a renter’s share at Drury-lane ;  
A prudent man in every other matter,  
Known at his club-room for an honest hatter ;  
Humane and courteous, led a civil life,  
And has been seldom known to beat his wife ;



But Jack is now grown quite another man,  
Frequents the green-room, knows the plot and plan  
Of each new piece,

And has been seen to talk with Sheridan!

In at the play-house just at six he pops,

And never quits it till the curtain drops,

Is never absent on the *author's night*,

Knows actresses and actors too——by sight;

So humble, that with Suett he'll confer,

Or take a pipe with plain Jack Bannister;

Nay, with an author has been known so free,

He once suggested a catastrophe—

In short, John dabbled till his head was turn'd:

His wife remonstrated, his neighbours mourned,

His customers were dropping off apace,

And Jack's affairs began to wear a piteous face.

One night his wife began a curtain lecture;

'My dearest Johnny, husband, spouse, protector,

Take pity on your helpless babes and me,

Save us from ruin, you from bankruptcy—

Look to your business, leave these cursed plays,

And try again your old industrious ways.'

Jack, who was always scar'd at the Gazette,

And had some bits of scull uninjured yet,

Promis'd amendment, vow'd his wife spake reason,

'He would not see another play that season—'

Three stubborn fortnights Jack his promise kept,

Was late and early in his shop, eat, slept,

And walk'd and talk'd, like ordinary men;

No *wit*, but John the hatter once again—

Visits his club: when lo! one *fatal night*

His wife with horror view'd the well-known sight—

John's *hat, wig, snuffbox*—well she knew his tricks—

And Jack decamping at the hour of six.

Just at the counter's edge a playbill lay,

Announcing that 'Pizarro' was the play—



‘ O Johnny, Johnny, this is your old doing.’  
 Quoth Jack, ‘ Why what the devil storm’s a-brewing ?  
 About a harmless play why all this fright ?  
 I’ll go and see it, if it’s but for spite—  
 Zounds, woman ! Nelson’s\* to be there to night.’

“ N.B.—This was intended for Jack Bannister to speak ; but the sage managers have chosen Miss *Heard*, except Miss Tidswell, the worst actress ever seen *or heard*. Now, I remember I have promis’d the loan of my play. I will lend it *instantly*, and you shall get it (’pon honor !) by this day week.

“ I must go and dress for the boxes ! First night ! Finding I have time, I transcribe the rest. Observe, you have read the last first ; it begins thus :—The names I took from a little outline G. gave me. I have not read the play !

‘ Ladies, ye’ve seen how Guzman’s consort died,  
 Poor victim of a Spaniard brother’s pride,  
 When Spanish honour through the world was blown,  
 And Spanish beauty for the best was known†.  
 In that romantic, unenlightened time,  
 A *breach* of *promise*‡ was a sort of crime—  
 Which of you handsome English ladies here,  
 But deems the penance bloody and severe ?

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\* “ A good clap-trap. Nelson has exhibited two or three times at both theatres—and advertised himself.”

† “ Four *easy* lines.”

‡ “ For which the *heroine* died.”



A whimsical old Saragossa\* fashion,  
 That a dead father's dying inclination  
 Should *live* to thwart a living daughter's passion,†  
 Unjustly on the sex *we* ‡ men exclaim,  
 Rail at *your* § vices, and commit the same ;—  
 Man is a promise-breaker from the womb,  
 And goes a promise-breaker to the tomb—  
 What need we instance here the lover's vow,  
 The sick man's purpose, or the great man's bow ? ||  
 The truth by few examples best is shown—  
 Instead of many which are better known,  
 Take poor Jack Incident' that's dead and gone.  
 Jack, &c., &c., &c.

“Now you have it all—how do you like it ? I am going to see it recited !!!”

Alas for human hopes ! The play was decisively damned, and the epilogue shared its fate. The tragedy turned out a miracle of dullness for the world to wonder at, although Lamb always insisted it had one fine line, which he was fond of repeating—sole relic of the else forgotten play. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, the brother and sister of the drama, toiled through four acts and a half without applause or disapprobation ; one speech was not more vapid than another ; and so dead was the level of the dialogue, that, although its destiny was

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\* In *Spain* ! !      † Two *neat* lines.      ‡ Or *you*.  
 § Or *our*, as *they* have altered it.      || Antithesis ! !



seen from afar, it presented no opportunity for hissing. But as the play drew towards a close, when, after a scene of frigid chiding not vivified by any fire of Kemble's own, Antonio drew his sword and plunged it into the heroine's bosom, the "sad civility" of the audience vanished, they started as at a real murder, and hooted the actors from the stage. "Philosophy," which could not "make a Juliet," sustained the author through the trial. He sat on one of the front benches of the pit, unmoved amidst the storm. When the first act passed off without a hand, he expressed his satisfaction at the good sense of the house; "the proper season of applause had not arrived;" all was exactly as it should be. The second act proceeded to its close in the same uninterrupted calm; his friends became uneasy, but still his optimism prevailed; he could afford to wait. And though he did at last admit the great movement was somewhat tardy, and that the audience seemed rather patient than interested, he did not lose his confidence till the tumult arose, and then he submitted with quiet dignity to the fate of genius, too lofty to be understood by a world as yet in its childhood! Notwithstanding this rude repulse, Mr. Godwin retained his taste for the theatre to the last. On every first night of a



new piece, whether tragedy, comedy, or farce; whether of friend or foe; he sat with gentle interest in a side box, and bore its fate, whatever it might be, with resignation, as he had done his own. The following is Lamb's account of the catastrophe rendered to Manning, in which the facetious charge against the unlucky author of "Violent and Satanical Pride of Heart" has reference to some banter which Lamb had encountered among his friends by the purposed title of his own play, "Pride's Cure," and his disquisition in its defence.

## TO MR. MANNING.

"We are damned!—Not the facetious epilogue itself could save us. For, as the editor of the *Morning Post*, quick-sighted gentleman! hath this morning truly observed (I beg pardon if I falsify his *words*, their profound *sense* I am sure I retain) both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece; and indeed (mark the profundity, Mister Manning) were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. Professor, thy glories wax dim! Again, the incomparable author



of the True Briton declareth in *his* paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. O Professor, how different thy feelings now (*quantum mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophiæ tantas victorias acquisivisti*),—how different thy proud feelings but one little week ago,—thy anticipation of thy nine nights,—those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day, and thy dreams by night! Calling in accidentally on the Professor, while he was out, I was usher'd into the study; and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which indicated the violent and satanical pride of heart. Imprimis, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou didst meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges; I was in the honor'd file! Next, a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride, lay a list of all the morning papers (from the Morning Chronicle downwards to the Porcupine), with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate



sketch of the story of thy play ; stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with, and severely wast thou bruised, O Professor ! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next—which convinced me, to a dead conviction, of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride—lay a list of books, which thy un-tragedy-favour'd pocket could never answer ; Dodsley's old plays, Malone's Shakspeare (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to superstitious minds) ; nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory), that the ambitious Encyclopedia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions ; but many a play book was there. All these visions are *damned* ; and thou, Professor, must read Shakspeare in future out of a common edition ; and, hark ye, pray read him to a little better purpose ! Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall), lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart misgave thee, that thy assistant might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue ! Manning, all these things came over my mind ; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend ; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits (the Pro-



fessor is 500*l.* ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides 200*l.* he would have got for the copyright); and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eye-lids), and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of 200*l.* from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full 50*l.* The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel: his face was lengthened, and all over perspiration; I never saw such a care-fraught visage; I could have hugg'd him, I loved him so intensely. 'From every pore of him a perfume fell.' I have seen that man in many situations, and, from my soul, I think that a more god-like honest soul exists not in this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper, and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe; but, alas! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humour'd him with a specious proposition, but have since join'd



his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*.

“L.”

In another letter, a few days after, Lamb thus recurs to the subject, and closes the century in anticipation of a visit to his friend at Cambridge.

TO MR. MANNING.

“As for the Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin’s Persian Travels for a story to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Has not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residence against such professors? Are poets so *few* in *this age*, that *he* must write poetry? *Is morals* a subject so exhausted, that he must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

“If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor’s heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was counsel for Archbishop Fenelon versus my own mother, in the famous fire cause!



“ Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all.  
I have metal more attractive on foot.

“ Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee,  
Deo volente, et diabolo nolente, on Monday night  
the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a  
cup to the infant century.

“ A word or two of my progress. Embark at  
six o'clock in the morning, with a fresh gale, on a  
Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night;  
land at St. Mary's light-house, muffins and coffee  
upon table (or any other curious production of  
Turkey, or both Indies), snipes exactly at nine,  
punch to commence at ten, with argument; differ-  
ence of opinion is expected to take place about  
eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and  
dimness, before twelve.—N. B. My single affection  
is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious  
and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in  
beholding a delicate and well chosen assortment of  
teals, ortolans, the unctious and palate-soothing  
flesh of geese, wild and tame, nightingales' brains,  
the sensorium of a young sucking pig, or any other  
Christmas dish, which I leave to the judgment of  
you and the cook of Gonville.

“ C. LAMB.”



## CHAPTER VII.

[1801 to 1804.]

LETTERS TO MANNING, WORDSWORTH, AND COLERIDGE; JOHN WOODVIL REJECTED, PUBLISHED, AND REVIEWED.

THE ominous postponement of Lamb's theatrical hopes was followed by their disappointment at the commencement of the century. He was favoured with at least one interview by the stately manager of Drury-lane, Mr. Kemble, who extended his high-bred courtesy even to authors, whom he invariably attended to the door of his house in Great Russel-street, and bad them "beware of the step." Godwin's catastrophe had probably rendered him less solicitous to encounter a similar peril; which the fondest admirers of "John Woodvil" will not regret that it escaped. While the occasional roughness of its verse would have been



felt as strange to ears as yet unused to the old dramatists whom Lamb's Specimens had not then made familiar to the town, the delicate beauties enshrined within it would scarcely have been perceived in the glare of the theatre. Exhibiting "the depth, and not the tumults of the soul,"—presenting a female character of modest and retiring loveliness and noble purpose, but undistracted with any violent emotion,—and developing a train of circumstances which work out their gentle triumphs on the heart only of the hero, without stirring accident or vivid grouping of persons,—it would scarcely have supplied sufficient of coarse interest to disarm the critical spirit which it would certainly have encountered in all its bitterness. Lamb cheerfully consoled himself by publishing it; and at the close of the year 1801 it appeared in a small volume, of humble appearance, with the "Fragments of Burton," (to which Lamb alluded in one of his previous letters,) two of his quarto ballads, and the "Helen" of his sister.

The daring peculiarities attracted the notice of the Edinburgh reviewers, then in the infancy of their slashing career, and was immolated, in due form, by the self-constituted judges, who, taking for their motto, "*Judex damnatur cum no-*



*cens absolvitur*," treated our author as a criminal convicted of publishing, and awaiting his doom from their sentence. With the gay recklessness of power, at once usurped and irresponsible, they introduced Lord Mansfield's wild construction of the law of libel into literature; like him, holding every man *primâ facie* guilty, who should be caught in the act of publishing *a book*, and referring to the court to decide whether sentence should be passed on him. The article on "John Woodvil," which adorned their third number, is a curious example of the old style of criticism vivified by the impulses of youth. We wonder now—and probably the writer of the article, if he is living, will wonder with us—that a young critic should seize on a little eighteen-penny book, simply printed, without any preface; make elaborate merriment of its outline, and, giving no hint of its containing one profound thought or happy expression, leave the reader of the review at a loss to suggest a motive for noticing such vapid absurdities. This article is written in a strain of grave banter, the theme of which is to congratulate the world on having a specimen of the rudest condition of the drama, "a man of the age of Thespis." "At length," says the reviewer, "even in composition a mighty veteran



has been born. Older than Æschylus, and with all the spirit of originality, in an age of poets who had before them the imitations of some thousand years, he comes forward to establish his claim to the ancient *hircus*, and to satiate the most remote desires of the philosophic antiquary." On this text the writer proceeds, selecting for his purpose whatever, torn from its context, appeared extravagant and crude, and ending without the slightest hint that there is merit, or promise of merit, in the volume. There certainly was no malice, or desire to give pain, in all this; it was merely the result of the thoughtless adoption, by lads of gaiety and talent, of the old critical canons of the monthly reviews, which had been accustomed to damn all works of unpatronized genius in a more summary way, and after a duller fashion. These very critics wrought themselves into good-nature as they broke into deeper veins of thought; grew gentler as they grew wiser; and sometimes, even when, like Balaam, they came to curse, like him, they ended with "blessing altogether," as in the review of the "Excursion," which, beginning in the old strain, "This will never do," proceeded to give examples of its noblest passages, and to grace them with worthiest eulogy. And now, the spirit of the



writers thus ridiculed, especially of Wordsworth, breathes through the pages of this very review, and they not seldom wear the "rich embroidery" of the language of the poet once scoffed at by their literary corporation as too puerile for the nursery.

Lamb's occasional connexion with newspapers introduced him to some of the editors and contributors of that day, who sought to repair the spirit wasted by perpetual exertion, in the protracted conviviality of the evening, and these associates sometimes left poor Lamb with an aching head, and a purse exhausted by the claims of their necessities upon it. Among those was Fenwick, immortalized as the *Bigod* of "Elia," who edited several ill-fated newspapers in succession, and was the author of many libels, which did his employers no good and his Majesty's government no harm. These connexions will explain some of the allusions in the following letters.

TO MR. MANNING.

"I heard that you were going to China\*, with a commission from the Wedgewoods to collect hints

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\* Mr. Manning had begun to be haunted with the idea of China, and to talk of going thither, which he accomplished some years afterwards, without any motive but a desire to see that great nation.



for their pottery, and to teach the Chinese *perspective*. But I did not know that London lay in your way to Peking. I am seriously glad of it, for I shall trouble you with a small present for the Emperor of Usbeck Tartary, as you go by his territories: it is a fragment of a ‘Dissertation on the state of political parties in England at the end of the eighteenth century,’ which will no doubt be very interesting to his Imperial Majesty. It was written originally in English for the use of the *two* and *twenty* readers of ‘The Albion,’ (this *calculation* includes a printer, four pressmen, and a devil); but becoming of no use, when ‘The Albion’ stopped, I got it translated into Usbeck Tartar by my good friend Tibet Kulm, who is come to London with a *civil* invitation from the Cham to the English nation to go over to the worship of the Lama.

“ ‘The Albion’ is dead—dead as nail in door—and my revenues have died with it; but I am not as a man without hope. I have got a sort of an opening to ‘The Morning Chronicle!!!’ Mr. Manning, by means of that common dispenser of benevolence, Mister Dyer. I have not seen Perry, the editor, yet; but I am preparing a specimen. Shall have a difficult job to manage, for you must know that Mr. Perry, in common with the great



body of the Whigs, thinks 'The Albion' *very low*. I find I must rise a peg or so, be a little more decent, and less abusive; for, to confess the truth, I had arrived to an abominable pitch; I spared neither age nor sex when my cue was given me. *N'importe*, (as they say in French,) any climate will suit me. So you are about to bring your old face-making face to London. You could not come in a better time for my purposes; for I have just lost Rickman, a faint idea of whose character I sent you. He is gone to Ireland for a year or two, to make his fortune; and I have lost by his going, what seems to me I can never recover—a *finished man*. His memory will be to me as the brazen serpent to the Israelites,—I shall look up to it, to keep me upright and honest. But he may yet bring back his honest face to England one day. I wish your affairs with the Emperor of China had not been *so urgent*, that you might have stayed in Great Britain a year or two longer, to have seen him; for, judging from *my own* experience, I almost dare pronounce you never saw his equal. I never saw a man, that could be at all a second or substitute for him in any sort.

“Imagine that what is here erased, was an apology and explanation, perfectly satisfactory you



may be sure ! for rating this man so highly at the expense of —, and —, and —, and M—, and —, and —, and —. But Mr. Burke has explained this phenomenon of our nature very prettily in his letter to a Member of the National Assembly, or else in appeal to the old Whigs, I forget which—do you remember an instance from Homer, (who understood these matters tolerably well,) of Priam driving away his other sons with expressions of wrath and bitter reproach, when Hector was just dead.

“ I live where I did in a *private* manner, because I don't like *state*. Nothing so disagreeable to me as the clamours and applauses of the mob. For this reason I live in an *obscure* situation in one of the courts of the Temple. “ C. L.

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“ I send you all of Coleridge's letters \* to me, which I have preserved : some of them are upon the subject of my play. I also send you Kemble's two letters, and the prompter's courteous epistle, with a curious critique on ‘ *Pride's Cure*, by a young Physician from EDINBRO',’ who mo-

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\* Lamb afterwards, in some melancholy mood, destroyed all Coleridge's Letters, and was so vexed with what he had done, that he never preserved any letters which he received afterwards.



destly suggests quite another kind of a plot. These are monuments of my disappointment which I like to preserve.

“In Coleridge’s letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous display of it. I also send you the Professor’s letter to me, (careful professor! to conceal his *name* even from his correspondent,) ere yet the Professor’s pride was cured. O! monstrous and almost satanical pride!

“You will carefully keep all (except the Scotch Doctor’s, *which burn*) *in statu quo*, till I come to claim mine own.

“C. LAMB.”

The following is in reply to a pressing invitation from Mr. Wordsworth, to visit him at the Lakes.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

“I ought before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang any where; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don’t now care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days



in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet-street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles;—life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet-street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print-shops, the old book-stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?



“My attachments are all local, purely local—I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books,) to groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about like a faithful dog (only exceeding him in knowledge,) wherever I have moved,—old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses—have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes, affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind; and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm



are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna\*.

“Give my kindest love, *and my sister's*, to D. and yourself. And a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite.† Thank you for liking my play!

“C. L.”

The next two letters were written to Manning when on a tour upon the Continent.

TO MR. MANNING.

“*Apropos*, I think you wrong about my play. All the omissions are right. And the supplementary scene, in which Sandford narrates the manner in which his master is affected, is the best in the book. It stands, where a hodge-podge of German puerilities used to stand. I insist upon it that you like that scene. Love me, love that scene. I will now transcribe the ‘Londoner’ (No. 1,) and wind up all with affection and humble servant at the end.”

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\* Alluding to the Inscription of Wordsworth's, entitled “Joanna,” containing a magnificent description of the effect of laughter echoing amidst the great mountains of Westmoreland.

† Alluding to Wordsworth's poem, “The Pet Lamb.”



[Here was transcribed the essay called "The Londoner," which was published some years afterwards in "The Reflector," and which forms part of Lamb's collected works.] He then proceeds:—

" 'What is all this about?' said Mrs. Shandy. 'A story of a cock and a bull,' said Yorick: and so it is; but Manning will take good-naturedly what *God will send him* across the water: only I hope he won't *shut* his *eyes*, and *open* his *mouth*, as the children say, for that is the way to *gape* and not to *read*. Manning, continue your laudable purpose of making me your register. I will render back all your remarks; and *I, not you*, shall have received usury by having read them. In the mean time, may the great Spirit have you in his keeping, and preserve our Englishman from the inoculation of frivolity and sin upon French earth.

" *Allons* (or what is it you say,) instead of *good-bye*?

" Mary sends her kind remembrance, and covets the remarks equally with me.

" C. LAMB.

" Monday, 15th February, 1802."



TO MR. MANNING.

My dear Manning,—I must positively write, or I shall miss you at Toulouse. I sit here like a decayed minute-hand (I lie; *that* does not *sit*,) and being myself the exponent of no time, take no heed how the clocks about me are going. You possibly by this time may have explored all Italy, and toppled, unawares, into Etna, while you went too near those rotten-jawed, gap-toothed, old worn-out chaps of hell,—while I am meditating a quiescent letter to the honest post-master of 'Toulouse. But in case you should not have been *felo de se*, this is to tell you, that your letter was quite to my palate—in particular your just remarks upon Industry, cursed Industry, (though indeed you left me to explore the reason) were highly relishing. I've often wished I lived in the golden age, when shepherds lay stretched upon flowers,—the genius there is in a man's natural, idle face, that has not learned his multiplication table! before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries, got into the world!

\* \* \* \*

“Apropos: if you should go to Florence or Rome, enquire what works are extant in gold,



silver, bronze, or marble, of Benvenuto Cellini, a Florentine artist, whose Life, doubtless, you have read; or, if not, without controversy you must read, so hark' ye, send for it immediately from Lane's circulating library. It is always put among the romances, very properly; but you have read it, I suppose. In particular enquire at Florence for his colossal bronze statue (in the grand square, or somewhere) of Perseus. You may read the story in 'Tooke's Pantheon.' Nothing material has transpired in these parts. Coleridge has indited a violent philippic against Mr. Fox in the 'Morning Post,' which is a compound of expressions of humility, gentleman-ushering-in most arrogant charges. It will do Mr. Fox no real injury among those that know him."

In the summer of 1802, Lamb, in company with his sister, visited the lakes, and spent three weeks with Coleridge at Keswick. There he also met the true annihilater of the slave-trade, Thomas Clarkson, who was then enjoying a necessary respite from his stupendous labours, in a cottage on the borders of Ulswater. Lamb had no taste for oratorical philanthropy; but he felt the gran-



deur and simplicity of Clarkson's character, and appreciated the unexampled self-denial with which he steeled his heart, trembling with nervous sensibility, to endure intimate acquaintance with the foulest details of guilt and wickedness which he lived, and could have died, to abolish. Wordsworth was not in the lake-country during Lamb's visit; but he made amends by spending some time in town after Lamb's return, and then quitted it for Yorkshire to be married. Lamb's following letters show that he made some advances towards fellowship with the hills which at a distance he had treated so cavalierly; but his feelings never heartily associated with "the bare earth, and mountains bare," which sufficed Wordsworth; he rather loved to cleave to the little hints and suggestions of nature in the midst of crowded cities. In his latter years I have heard him, when longing after London among the pleasant fields of Enfield, declare that his love of natural scenery would be abundantly satisfied by the patches of long waving grass, and the stunted trees, that blacken in the old-church-yard nooks which you may yet find bordering on Thames-street.



TO MR. COLERIDGE.

1802.

“ Dear Coleridge,—I thought of not writing till we had performed some of our commissions; but we have been hindered from setting about them, which yet shall be done to a tittle. We got home very pleasantly on Sunday. Mary is a good deal fatigued, and finds the difference of going *to* a place, and coming *from* it. I feel that I shall remember your mountains to the last day I live. They haunt me perpetually. I am like a man who has been falling in love unknown to himself, which he finds out when he leaves the lady. I do not remember any very strong impression while they were present; but, being gone, their mementos are shelved in my brain. We passed a very pleasant little time with the Clarksons. The Wordsworths are at Montague’s rooms, near neighbours to us\*. They dined with us yesterday, and I was their guide to Bartlemy fair !”

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\* Mr. Basil Montague and his Lady, who were, during Lamb’s life, among his most cordial and most honoured friends.



TO MR. MANNING.

“ 24th Sept. 1802, London.

“ My dear Manning,—Since the date of my last letter, I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly intend never to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year, prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was, a tour to the lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice, for, my time being precious, did not admit of it. He



received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seem'd, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c. &c. We thought we had got into fairy land. But that went off (and it never came again; while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets); and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose that I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study, which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old fashioned organ, never play'd upon, big enough



for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Eolian harp, and an old sofa, half bed, &c. And all looking out upon the fading view of Skiddaw, and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we staid three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people, and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London, and past much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater; I forget the name\*; to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself, that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morn-

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\* Patterdale.



ing the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired, when she got about half way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water, she surmounted it most manfully. O, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks—I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controul'd by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than amidst Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, parti-



icipating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think, *i. e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or no, remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i. e.* the night, glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant?—O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shame-worthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard, but it is just now nearest my heart. F—— is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. ———



my other drunken companion (that has been: nam hic cæstus artemque repono) is turned editor of a Naval Chronicle. Godwin continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i. e.* to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted, &c. I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell; write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

“C. LAMB.”

Lamb was fond of Latin composition when at school, and was then praised for it. He was always fond of reading Latin verse, and late in life taught his sister to read it. About this time, he hazarded the following Latin letter to Coleridge, of whose classical acquirements he stood in awe.



TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ Carolus Agnus Coleridgio suo S.

“ Carissime,—Scribis, ut nummos scilicet epistolarios solvam et postremo in Tartara abeam: immo tu potius Tartaricum (ut aiunt) deprehendisti, qui me vernaculâ meâ linguâ pro scribâ conductitio per tot annos satis eleganter usum ad Latinè impure et canino fere ore latrandum per tuasmet epistolas benè compositas et concinnatas percellire studueris. Conabor tamen: Attamen vereor, ut *Ædes* istas nostri Christi, inter quas tantâ diligentîâ magistri improbâ bonis literulis, quasi per clysterem quendam injectis, infrâ suprâque olim penitùs imbutus fui, Barnesii et Marklandii doctissimorum virorum nominibus adhuc gaudentes, barbarismis meis peregrinis et aliunde quæsitis valde dehonestavero. Sed pergere quocunque placet. Adeste igitur, quotquot estis, conjugationum declinationumve turmæ, terribilia spectra, et tu imprimis ades, Umbra et Imago maxima obsoletæ (Diis gratiæ) Virgæ, quâ novissime in mentem receptâ, horrescunt subitò natales, et parum deest quo minùs braccas meas ultro usque ad crura demittam, et ipse puer pueriliter ejulem.



“Ista tua Carmina Chamouiana satis grandia esse mihi constat; sed hoc mihi nonnihil displicet, quòd in iis illæ montium Grisosorum inter se responsiones totidem reboant anglicè, *God, God*, haud aliter atque temet audiui tuas montes Cumbrianas resonare docentes, *Tod, Tod*, nempe Doctorem infelicem: vocem certe haud Deum Sonantem. Pro cæteris plaudo.

“Itidem comparationes istas tuas satis callidas et lepidas certè novi: sed quid hoc ad verum? cum illi Consulari viro et *mentem irritabilem* istum Julianum; et etiam *astutias frigidulas* quasdem Augusto propriiores, nequaquam congruenter uno afflatu comparationis causâ insedissee affirmaveris: necnon nescio quid similitudinis etiam cum Tiberio tertio in loco sollicite produxeris. Quid tibi equidem cum uno vel altero Cæsare, cùm universi Duodecim ad comparationes tuas se ultro tulerint? Præterea, vetustati adnutans, comparationes iniquas odi.

“Istas Wordsworthianas nuptias (vel potius cujusdam *Edmundii* tui) te retulisse mirificum gaudeo. Valeas, Maria, fortunata nimiam, et antiquæ illæ Mariæ Virgini (comparatione plusquam Cæsareanâ) forsitan comparanda, quoniam ‘beata inter mu-



lieres :’ et etiam fortasse Wordsworthium ipsum tuum maritum: Angelo Salutatori æquare fas erit, quoniam e Cœlo (ut ille) descendunt et Musæ et ipsæ Musicolæ: at Wordsworthium Musarum observantissimum semper novi. Necnon te quoque affinitate hâc nova, Dorothea, gratulor: et tu certe alterum *donum Dei*.

“ Istum Ludum, quem tu, Coleridgi, Americanum garris, a Ludo (ut Ludi sunt) maximè abhorrentem prætereo: nempe quid ad Ludum attinet, totius illæ gentis Columbianæ, a nostrâ gente, eadem stirpe ortâ, ludi singuli causa voluntatem perperam alienare? Quæso ego materiam ludi: te Bella ingeris.

“ Denique valeas, et quid de Latinitate meâ putes, dicas: facias ut opossim illum nostrum volentem vel (ut tu malis) quendam Piscem errabundum, a me salvum et pulcherrimum esse jubeas. Valeant uxor tua cum Hartleïo nostro. Soror mea salva est et ego: vos et ipsa salvere jubet. Ulterius progredi non liquet: homo sum æratus.

“ P. S. Pene mihi exciderat, apud me esse Librorum a Johanno Miltono Latinè scriptorum volumina duo, quæ (Deo volente) cum cæteris tuis



libris ocyùs citiùs per Maria ad te missura curabo : sed me in hoc tali genere rerum nullo modo *fes-  
tinantem* novisti : habes confitentem reum. Hoc solum dici restat, prædicta volumina pulchra esse et omnia opera Latina J. M. in se continere. Circa defensionem istam Pro Pop<sup>o</sup>. Ang<sup>o</sup>. acerrimam in præsens ipse præclaro gaudio moror.

“Jussa tua Stuartina faciam ut diligenter colam.

“Iterum iterumque valeas :

“Et facias memor sis nostri.”

The publication of the second volume of the “Anthology” gave occasion to the following letter:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“In the next edition of the ‘Anthology’ (which Phœbus avert, and those nine other wandering maids also !) please to blot out gentle-hearted, and substitute drunken-dog, ragged-head, seld-shaven, odd-ey’d, stuttering, or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question. And for Charles read Tom, or Bob, or Richard, for mere delicacy. Hang you, I was beginning to forgive you, and believe in earnest that



the lugging in of my proper name was purely unintentional on your part, when looking back for further conviction, stares me in the face Charles Lamb of the *India House*. Now I am convinced it was all done in malice, heaped, sack-upon-sack, congregated, studied malice. You dog! your 141st page shall not save you. I own I was just ready to acknowledge that there is a something not unlike good poetry in that page, if you had not run into the unintelligible abstraction-fit about the manner of the Deity's making spirits perceive his presence. God, nor created thing alive, can receive any honour from such thin, shew-box attributes. By-the-by, where did you pick up that scandalous piece of private history about the angel and the Duchess of Devonshire? If it is a fiction of your own, why truly it is a very modest one for you. Now I do affirm, that *Lewti* is a very beautiful poem. I *was* in earnest when I praised it. It describes a silly species of one not the wisest of passions. *Therefore* it cannot deeply affect a disenthralled mind. But such imagery, such novelty, such delicacy, and such versification never got into an 'Anthology,' before. I am only sorry that the cause of all the passionate complaint



is not greater than the trifling circumstance of Lewti being out of temper one day. Gauberto certainly has considerable originality, but sadly wants finishing. It is, as it is, one of the very best in the book. Next to Lewti I like the Raven, which has a good deal of humour. I was pleased to see it again, for you once sent it me, and I have lost the letter which contained it. Now I am on the subject of Anthologies, I must say I am sorry the old pastoral way is fallen into disrepute. The gentry which now indite sonnets are certainly the legitimate descendants of the ancient shepherds. The same simpering face of description, the old family face, is visibly continued in the line. Some of their ancestors' labours are yet to be found in Allan Ramsay's and Jacob Tonson's Miscellanies. But miscellanies decaying, and the old pastoral way dying of mere want, their successors (driven from their paternal acres) now-a-days settle and live upon Magazines and Anthologies. This race of men are uncommonly addicted to superstition. Some of them are idolators and worship the moon. Others deify qualities, as love, friendship, sensibility; or bare accidents, as Solitude. Grief and Melancholy have their respective altars and temples



among them, as the heathens builded theirs to Mors, Febris, Pallor, &c. They all agree in ascribing a peculiar sanctity to the number fourteen. One of their own legislators affirmeth, that whatever exceeds that number ‘encroacheth upon the province of the elegy’—*vice versa*, whatever ‘cometh short of that number abutteth upon the premises of the epigram.’ I have been able to discover but few *images* in their temples, which, like the caves of Delphos of old, are famous for giving *echoes*. They impute a religious importance to the letter O, whether because by its roundness it is thought to typify the moon, their principal goddess, or for its analogies to their own labours, all ending where they began, or for whatever other high and mystical reference, I have never been able to discover, but I observe they never begin their invocations to their gods without it, except indeed one insignificant sect among them, who use the Doric A, pronounced like Ah! broad, instead. These boast to have restored the old Dorian mood.

“C. L.”

The following letter embodies in strong language Lamb’s disgust at the *rational* mode of educating



children. While he gave utterance to a deep and hearted feeling of jealousy for the old delightful books of fancy, which were banished by the sense of Mrs. Barbauld, he cherished great respect for that lady's power as a true English prose writer; and spoke often of her "Essay on Inconsistent Expectations," as alike bold and original in thought and elegant in style.

## TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"I read daily your political essays. I was particularly pleased with 'Once a Jacobin:;' though the argument is obvious enough, the style was less swelling than your things sometimes are, and it was plausible *ad populum*. A vessel has just arrived from Jamaica with the news of poor ——'s death. He died at Jamaica of the yellow fever. His course was rapid and he had been very foolish, but I believe there was more of kindness and warmth in him than in almost any other of our schoolfellows. The annual meeting of the Blues is to-morrow, at the London Tavern, where poor Sammy dined with them two years ago, and attracted the notice of all by the singular foppishness of his dress. When men go off the stage so early, it



scarce seems a noticeable thing in their epitaphs, whether they have been wise or silly in their lifetime.

“ I am glad the snuff and Pi-pos’s\* books please. ‘Goody Two Shoes’ is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld’s stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery ; and the shopman at Newbery’s hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs. B.’s and Mrs. Trimmer’s nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs. B.’s books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the *shape of knowledge*, and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learnt, that a horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a horse, and such like : instead of that beautiful interest in wild tales, which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil ? Think of what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with tales

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\* A nickname of endearment for little Hartley Coleridge.



and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history !

“ Hang them !—I mean the cursed reasoning crew, those blights and blasts of all that is human in man and child.

“ As to the translations, let me do two or three hundred lines, and then do you try the nostrums upon Stuart in any way you please. If they go down, I will bray more. In fact, if I got or could but get 50*l.* a year only, in addition to what I have, I should live in affluence.

Have you anticipated it, or could not you give a parallel of Bonaparte with Cromwell, particularly as the contrast in their deeds affecting *foreign* states? Cromwell's interference for the Albigenses, B.'s against the Swiss. Then religion would come in ; and Milton and you could rant about our countrymen of that period. This is a hasty suggestion, and the more hasty because I want my supper. I have just finished Chapman's Homer. Did you ever read it ?—it has most the continuous power of interesting you all along, like a rapid original, of any ; and in the uncommon excellence of the more finished parts goes beyond Fairfax or any of 'em. The metre is fourteen syllables, and capable of all



sweetness and grandeur. Cowper's ponderous blank verse detains you every step with some heavy Miltonism; Chapman gallops off with you his own free pace. Take a simile for example. The council breaks up—

‘ Being abroad, the earth was overlaid  
With flockers to them, that came forth; as when of frequent bees  
Swarms rise out of a hollow rock, repairing the degrees  
*Of their egression endlessly, with ever rising new*  
From forth their sweet nest; as their store, still as it faded, grew,  
*And never would cease sending forth her clusters to the spring,*  
They still crowd out so; this flock here, that there, belabouring  
The loaded flowers. So,’ &c. &c.

“ What *endless egression of phrases* the dog commands !

“ Take another, Agamemnon wounded, bearing his wound heroically for the sake of the army (look below) to a woman in labour.

‘ He, with his lance, sword, mighty stones, pour’d his heroic wreak  
On other squadrons of the foe, whiles yet warm blood did break  
Thro’ his cleft veins: but when the wound was quite exhaust and crude,  
The eager anguish did approve his princely fortitude.  
As when most sharp and bitter pangs distract a labouring dame,  
Which the divine Ilithiæ, that rule the painful frame  
Of human childbirth, pour on her; the Ilithiæ that are  
The daughters of Saturnia; with whose extreme repair  
The woman in her travail strives to take the worst it gives;  
With thought, it *must be, ’tis love’s fruit, the end for which she lives;*  
*The mean to make herself new born, what comforts* will redound:  
So,’ &c.



“ I will tell you more about Chapman and his peculiarities in my next. I am much interested in him.

“ Yours ever affectionately, and Pi-pos’s,

“ C. L.”

The following fragment of a letter about this time to Coleridge refers to an offer of Coleridge to supply Lamb with literal translations from the German which he might versify for the “ Morning Post,” for the increase of Lamb’s slender income.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ Dear Coleridge,—Your offer about the German poems is exceedingly kind ; but I do not think it a wise speculation, because the time it would take you to put them into prose, would be nearly as great as if you versified them. Indeed I am sure you could do the one nearly as soon as the other ; so that instead of a division of labour, it would be only a multiplication. But I will think of your offer in another light. I dare say I could find many things, of a light nature, to suit that paper, which you would not object to pass upon Stuart as your own, and I should come in for some light profits, and Stuart think the more highly of



your assiduity. ‘Bishop Hall’s Characters’ I know nothing about, having never seen them. But I will reconsider your offer, which is very plausible; for as to the drudgery of going every day to an editor with my scraps, like a pedlar, for him to pick out and tumble about my ribbons and posies, and to wait in his lobby, &c., no money could make up for the degradation. You are in too high request with him to have any thing unpleasant of that sort to submit to.

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[The letter refers to several articles and books which Lamb promised to send to Coleridge, and proceeds :]

“ You must write me word whether the cap and Miltons are worth paying carriage for. You have a Milton; but it is pleasanter to eat one’s own peas out of one’s own garden, than to buy them by the peck at Covent-garden; and a book reads the better, which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots, and dogs-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with butter’d muffins, or over a pipe, which I think is the maximum. But, Coleridge, you must accept these little things, and not think of returning



money for them, for I do not set up for a factor or general agent. As for fantastic debts of £15, I'll think you were dreaming, and not trouble myself seriously to attend to you. My bad Latin you properly correct; but *natales* for *nates* was an inadvertency: I knew better. *Progredi*, or *progredi*, I thought indifferent, my authority being Ainsworth. However, as I have got a fit of Latin, you will now and then indulge me with an *epistola*. I pay the postage of this, and propose doing it by turns. In that case I can now and then write to you without remorse; not that you would mind the money, but you have not always ready cash to answer small demands, the *epistolarii nummi*.

“Your ‘Epigram on the Sun and Moon in Germany’ is admirable. Take ’em all together, they are as good as Harrington’s. I will muster up all the conceits I can, and you shall have a packet some day. You and I together can answer all demands surely: you, mounted on a terrible charger, (like Homer, in the Battle of the Books,) at the head of the cavalry: I will lead the light horse. I have just heard from Stoddart. Allen and he intend taking Keswick in their way home. Allen wished particularly to have it a secret that he is in Scotland, and wrote to me accordingly very urgently.



As luck was, I had told not above three or four; but Mary had told Mrs. G——, of Christ's Hospital!

“For the present, farewell: never forgetting love to Pipos and his friends.

“C. LAMB.”

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“Wednesday Night.

“Observe, there comes to you, by the Kendal waggon to-morrow, the illustrious 4th of November, a box, containing the Miltons, the strange American Bible, with White's brief note, to which you will attend; ‘Baxter's Holy Commonwealth,’ for which you stand indebted to me 3*s.* 6*d.*; an odd volume of Montaigne, being of no use to me, I having the whole; certain books belonging to Wordsworth, as do also the strange thick-hoofed shoes, which are very much admired at in London. All these sundries I commend to your most strenuous looking after. If you find the Miltons in certain parts dirtied and soiled with a crumb of right Gloucester blacked in the candle, (my usual supper,) or peradventure a stray ash of tobacco wafted into the crevices, look to that passage more especially:



depend upon it, it contains good matter. I have got your little Milton, which, as it contains ‘Salmasius’—and I make a rule of never hearing but one side of the question (why should I distract myself?)—I shall return to you, when I pick up the *Latina opera*. The first Defence is the greatest work among them, because it is uniformly great, and such as is befitting the very mouth of a great nation, speaking for itself. But the second Defence, which is but a succession of splendid episodes, slightly tied together, has one passage which, if you have not read, I conjure you to lose no time, but read it; it is his consolations in his blindness, which had been made a reproach to him. It begins whimsically, with poetical flourishes about Tiresias and other blind worthies, (which still are mainly interesting as displaying his singular mind, and in what degree poetry entered into his daily soul, not by fits and impulses, but engrained and innate,) but the concluding page, *i. e.* of *this passage*, (not the *Defensis*,) which you will easily find, divested of all brags and flourishes, gives so rational, so true an enumeration of his comforts, so human, that it cannot be read without the deepest interest. Take one touch of the religious part:—‘*Et sane haud ultima Dei cura cæci*—(*we blind folks*, I understand it; not *nos*



for *ego*)—sumus; qui nos, quominus quicquam aliud præter ipsum cernere valemus, eo clementius atque benignius respicere dignatur. Væ qui illudit nos, væ qui lædit, execratione publica devovendo; nos ab injuriis hominum non modo incolumes, sed pene sacros divina lex reddidit, divinus favor; nec tam *oculorum hebetudine* quam *cœlestium alarum umbrâ* has nobis fecisse tenebras videtur, factas illustrare rursus interiore ac longe præstabiliore lumine haud raro solet. Huc refero, quod et amici officiosius nunc etiam quam solebant, colunt, observant, adsunt; quod et nonnulli sunt, quibuscum Pyladeas atque Theseas alternare voces verorum amicorum liceat,

‘ Vade gubernaculum mei pedis,  
Da manum ministro amico.  
Da collo manum tuum, ductor viæ ero tibi.’

All this, and much more, is highly pleasing to know. But you may easily find it;—and I don’t know why I put down so many words about it, but for the pleasure of writing to you, and the want of another topic.

“ Yours ever,

“ C. LAMB.

“ To-morrow I expect with anxiety S. T. C.’s letter to Mr. Fox.”







The following letters were written to Manning, at Paris, while still haunted with the idea of oriental adventure.

## TO MR. MANNING.

“My dear Manning,—The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God’s sake don’t think any more of ‘Independent Tartary.’ What are you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John? Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon it they’ll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. Read Sir John Mandeville’s travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartarman now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favourable specimen of his countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words, Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea* of *oblivion*,



('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories) or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *independence*? That was a clever way of the old puritans, pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconversable, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then, conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan, and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there are no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention*; but if there were such darling things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the horse of brass, and frisk off for Prester John's country. But these are all tales; a horse of brass never flew, and a king's daughter never talked with birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try*, and cure yourself. Take hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat



nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip.* Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they are nothing but lies,) only now and then a romance, to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin.* Accustom yourself to write familiar letters, on common subjects, to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a pun at Otaheite in the O. language\*. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the gentleman*. Rickman is a man 'absolute in all numbers.' I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out at five pence a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland,) not as a guest, but as a meat.

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\* Captain, afterwards Admiral Burney, who became one of the most constant attendants on Lamb's parties, and whose son, Martin, grew up in his strongest regard, and received the honour of the dedication of the second volume of his works.



“God bless you: do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some minister. Why not your father?”

“God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.”

“Your sincere friend,

“C. LAMB.

“19th February, 1803, London.”

TO MR. MANNING.

“1803.

“Not a sentence, not a syllable of Trismegistus, shall be lost through my neglect. I am his word-banker, his store-keeper of puns and syllogisms. You cannot conceive (and if Trismegistus cannot, no man can) the strange joy which I felt at the receipt of a letter from Paris. It seemed to give me a learned importance, which placed me above all, who had not Parisian correspondents. Believe, that I shall carefully husband every scrap, which will save you the trouble of memory, when you come back. You cannot write things so trifling, let them only be about Paris, which I shall not treasure. In particular, I must have parallels of actors and actresses. I must be told if any building in Paris is at all comparable to Saint



Paul's, which, contrary to the usual mode of that part of our nature, called admiration, I have looked up to with unfading wonder, every morning at ten o'clock, ever since it has lain in my way to business. At noon I casually glance upon it, being hungry; and hunger has not much taste for the fine arts. Is any night-walk comparable to a walk from St. Paul's to Charing Cross, for lighting, and paving, crowds going and coming without respite, the rattle of coaches, and the cheerfulness of shops? Have you seen a man guillotined yet? is it as good as hanging? are the women *all* painted, and the men *all* monkeys? or are there not a *few* that look like *rational* of *both sexes*? Are you and the first consul *thick*? All this expense of ink I may fairly put you to, as your letters will not be solely for my proper pleasure; but are to serve as memoranda and notices, helps for short memory, a kind of Rumfordizing recollection, for yourself on your return. Your letter was just what a letter should be, crammed, and very funny. Every part of it pleased me, till you came to Paris, and your philosophical indolence, or indifference, stung me. You cannot stir from your rooms till you know the language! What the devil!—are men nothing but word-trumpets? are men all



tongue and ear? have these creatures, that you and I profess to know *something about*, no faces, gestures, gabble, no folly, no absurdity, no induction of French education upon the abstract idea of men and women, no similitude nor dissimilitude to English! Why, thou cursed Smellfungus! your account of your landing and reception, and Bullen, (I forget how you spell it, it was spelt my way in Harry the Eighth's time,) was exactly in that minute style which strong impressions INSPIRE, (writing to a Frenchman, I write as a Frenchman would). It appears to me, as if I should die with joy at the first landing in a foreign country. It is the nearest pleasure, which a grown man can substitute for that unknown one, which he can never know, the pleasure of the first entrance into life from the womb. I dare say, in a short time, my habits would come back like a 'stronger man' armed, and drive out that new pleasure; and I should soon sicken from known objects. Nothing has transpired here that seems to me of sufficient importance to send dry-shod over the water: but I suppose you will want to be told some news. The best and the worst to me is, that I have given up two guineas a-week at the 'Post,' and regained my health and spirits, which were upon the wane. I



grew sick, and Stuart unsatisfied. *Ludisti satis, tempus abire est*: I must cut closer, that's all. Mister Fell, or as you with your usual facetiousness and drollery, call him Mr. F+ll has stopped short in the middle of his play. Some *friend* has told him that it has not the least merit in it. O! that I had the rectifying of the Litany! I would put in a *libera nos (Scriptores videlicet) ab amicis!* That's all the news. *A propos* (is it pedantry, writing to a Frenchman, to express myself sometimes by a French word, when an English one would not do as well? methinks, my thoughts fall naturally into it)—

\* \* \* \* \*

“My dear Manning,—Although something of the latest, and after two months' waiting, your letter was highly gratifying. Some parts want a little explication; for example, ‘the god-like face of the first consul.’ *What god* does he most resemble, Mars, Bacchus, or Apollo? or the god Serapis, who, flying (as Egyptian chronicles deliver) from the fury of the dog Anubis (the hieroglyph of an English mastiff), lighted upon Monomotapa (or the land of apes), by some thought to be Old France, and there set up a tyranny, &c.



Our London prints of him represent him gloomy and sulky, like an angry Jupiter. I hear that he is very small, even less than me. I envy you your access to this great man, much more than your séances and conversaziones, which I have a shrewd suspicion must be something dull. What you assert concerning the actors of Paris, that they exceed our comedians, bad as ours are, is *impossible*. In one sense it may be true, that their fine gentlemen, in what is called genteel comedy, may possibly be more brisk and *dégagé* than Mr. Caulfield, or Mr. Whitfield, but have any of them the power to move *laughter in excess*? or can a Frenchman *laugh*? Can they batter at your judicious ribs till they *shake*, nothing loth to be so shaken? This is John Bull's criterion, and it shall be mine. You are Frenchified. Both your taste and morals are corrupt and perverted. By-and-bye you will come to assert, that Bonaparte is as great a general as the old Duke of Cumberland, and deny that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen. Read Henry the Fifth to restore your orthodoxy. All things continue at a stay-still in London. I cannot repay your new novelties with my stale reminiscences. Like the prodigal, I have spent my patrimony, and feed upon the superannuated chaff



and dry husks of repentance; yet sometimes I remember with pleasure the hounds and horses, which I kept in the days of my prodigality. I find nothing new, nor any thing that has so much of the gloss and dazzle of novelty, as may rebound in narrative, and cast a reflective glimmer across the channel. Did I send you an epitaph I scribbled upon a poor girl, who died at nineteen,—a good girl, and a pretty girl, and a clever girl, but strangely neglected by all her friends and kin?

‘ Under this cold marble stone  
Sleep the sad remains of one  
Who, when alive, by few or none  
Was lov’d, as lov’d she might have been,  
If she prosp’rous days had seen,  
Or had thriving been, I ween.  
Only this cold funeral stone  
Tells she was belov’d by one,  
Who on the marble graves his moan.’

“ I send you this, being the only piece of poetry, I have *done*, since the muses all went with T. M. to Paris. I have neither stuff in my brain, nor paper in my drawer, to write you a longer letter. Liquor, and company, and wicked tobacco, a’ nights, have quite dis-pericraniated me, as one may say; but you, who spiritualize upon Champagne, may continue to write long long letters, and stuff ’em with amusement to the end. Too long they cannot be,



any more than a codicil to a will, which leaves me sundry parks and manors not specified in the deed. But don't be *two months* before you write again.—These from merry old England, on the day of her valiant patron St. George.

“C. LAMB.”



## CHAPTER VIII.

[1804 to 1806.]

LETTERS TO MANNING, WORDSWORTH, RICKMAN,  
AND HAZLITT. "MR. H." WRITTEN,—ACCEPTED,  
—DAMNED.

THERE is no vestige of Lamb's correspondence in the year 1804, nor does he seem to have written for the press. This year, however, added to his list of friends—one in whose conversation he took great delight, until death severed them—William Hazlitt. This remarkable metaphysician and critic had then just completed his first work, the "Essay on the Principles of Human Action," but had not entirely given up his hope of excelling as a painter. After a professional tour through part of England, during which he satisfied his sitters better than himself, he remained some time at the house of his brother, then practising as a portrait painter with considerable success; and while endeavouring to



procure a publisher for his work, painted a portrait of Lamb, of which an engraving is prefixed to the present volume. It is one of the last of Hazlitt's efforts in an art which he afterwards illustrated with the most exquisite criticism which the knowledge and love of it could inspire.

Among the vestiges of the early part of 1805, are the three following letters to Manning. If the hero of the next letter, Mr. Richard Hopkins, is living, I trust he will not repine at being ranked with those who

“Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.”

TO MR. MANNING.

“16, Mitre Court Buildings,

“Saturday, 24th Feb. 1805.

“Dear Manning,—I have been very unwell since I saw you. A sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness; from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick Hopkins, the scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, has thrust himself into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College: and the generous creature has contrived, with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me



a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognize the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidentally fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that 'orders (to wit for brawn) from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland, will be duly executed,' &c. At first, I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis of all my hobbies the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops from the pan, skimmings, crumpets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander), the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, runaway gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyr'd pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks, the red spawn of lobsters, leveret's ears, and such pretty filchings common to cooks; but these had been ordinary presents, the everyday courtesies of dish-washers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem of it. It is like a picture of one of the old Italian mas-



ters. It's gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modest poet,—‘you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love;’ so brawn, you must taste it ere to you it will seem to have any taste at all. But 'tis nuts to the adept: those that will send out their tongue and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed and, not unsought, be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David's pictures (they call him *Darveed*), compared with the plain russet-coated wealth of a Titian or a Corregio, as I illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am moreover obliged to him for his inuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall chuse to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best



like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu; I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard's brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr. R. Hopkins. Crisp, the barber of St. Mary's, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chesnuts, or a puff, or two pound of hair: just to remember him by. Gifts are like nails. *Præsens ut absens*; that is, your *present* makes amends for your absence.

“ Yours,

“ C. LAMB.”

TO MR. MANNING.

“ Dear Manning,—I sent to Brown's immediately. Mr. Brown (or Pijou, as he is called by the moderns) denied the having received a letter from you. The one for you he remembered receiving, and remitting to Leadenhall-street; whither I immediately posted (it being the middle of dinner) my teeth unpicked. There I learned that if you want a letter set right, you must apply at the first



door on the left hand before one o'clock. I returned, and picked my teeth. And this morning I made my application in form, and have seen the vagabond letter, which most likely accompanies this. If it does not, I will get Rickman to name it to the Speaker, who will not fail to lay the matter before Parliament the next sessions, when you may be sure to have all abuses in the Post Department rectified.

“N. B. There seems to be some informality epidemical. You direct yours to me in Mitre-court; my true address is Mitre-court Buildings. By the pleasantries of Fortune, who likes a joke or a *double entendre* as well as the best of us her children, there happens to be another Mr. Lamb (that there should be two !!) in Mitre-court.

“Farewell, and think upon it.

“C. L.

“Saturday.”

TO MR. MANNING.

“Dear Manning,—Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday in this week. But if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed. We did pray



for you on Wednesday night. Oysters unusually luscious—pearls of extraordinary magnitude found in them. I have made bracelets of them—given them in clusters to ladies. Last night we went out in despite, because you were not come at your hour.

“This night we shall be at home, so shall we certainly both Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice, mind I don’t say of one : but choose which evening you will not, and come the other four. Doors open at five o’clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not as he pleases.

“C. L.”

During the last five years, tobacco had been at once Lamb’s solace and his bane. In the hope of resisting the temptation of late conviviality to which it ministered, he formed a resolution, the virtue of which can be but dimly guessed, to abandon its use; and embodied the floating fancies which had attended on his long wavering in one of the richest of his poems—“The Farewell to Tobacco.” After many struggles he divorced himself from his genial enemy; and though he afterwards renewed acquaintance with milder dalliance,



he ultimately abandoned it, and was guiltless of a pipe in his later years. The following letter, addressed while his sister was laid up with severe and protracted illness, will show his feelings at this time. Its affecting self-upbraidings refer to no greater failings than the social indulgences against which he was manfully struggling.

## TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

“ Friday, 14th June, 1805.

“ My Dear Miss Wordsworth,—I try to think Mary is recovering; but I cannot always feel it; and meanwhile she is lost to me, and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a fool, bereft of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I should think wrong; so used am I to look up to her in the least and the biggest perplexity. To say *all that I find her*, would be more than I think any body could possibly understand; and when I hope to have her well again so soon, it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her; for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older and wiser, and better than me, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death with me. She lives but for me. And



I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my ways of going on. But even in this upbraiding of myself I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse ; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade. I am stupid, and lose myself in what I write. I write rather what answers to my feelings (which are sometimes sharp enough) than express my present ones, for I am only flat and stupid.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I cannot resist transcribing three or four lines which poor Mary made upon a picture (a Holy Family) which we saw at an auction only one week before she was taken ill. They are sweet lines and upon a sweet picture. But I send them only as the latest memorial of her.

‘ VIRGIN AND CHILD, L. DA VINCI.

‘ Maternal lady with thy virgin-grace,  
Heaven-born, thy Jesus seemeth sure,  
And thou a virgin pure.  
Lady most perfect, when thy angel face  
Men look upon, they wish to be  
A Catholic, Madonna fair, to worship thee.’

“ You had her lines about the ‘ Lady Blanch.’  
You have not had some which she wrote upon a



copy of a girl from Titian, which I had hung up where that print of Blanch and the Abbess (as she beautifully interpreted two female figures from L. da Vinci) had hung in our room. 'Tis light and pretty.

‘ Who art thou, fair one, who usurp’st the place  
Of Blanch, the lady of the matchless grace?  
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me,  
Who in thy lifetime thou might’st be?  
Thou pretty art, and fair,  
But with the Lady Blanch thou never must compare.  
No need for Blanch her history to tell,  
Who ever saw her face, they there did read it well;  
But when I look on thee, I only know,  
There liv’d a pretty maid some hundred years ago.’

“ This is a little unfair, to tell so much about ourselves, and to advert so little to your letter, so full of comfortable tidings of you all. But my own cares press pretty close upon me, and you can make allowance. That you may go on gathering strength and peace is the next wish to Mary’s recovery.

“ I had almost forgot your repeated invitation. Supposing that Mary will be well and able, there is another *ability* which you may guess at, which I cannot promise myself. In prudence we ought not to come. This illness will make it still more prudential to wait. It is not a balance of this way



of spending our money against another way, but an absolute question of whether we shall stop now, or go on wasting away the little we have got beforehand. My best love, however, to you all; and to that most friendly creature, Mrs. Clarkson, and better health to her, when you see or write to her.

“CHARLES LAMB.”

The “Farewell to Tobacco” was shortly after transmitted to Mr. and Miss Wordsworth with the following.

TO MR. AND MISS WORDSWORTH.

“I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my ‘Friendly Traitress.’ Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years; and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one’s lips even, when it has become a habit. This poem is the only one which I have finished since so long as when I wrote ‘Hester Savory.’ I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me head-aches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you



have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line. No more has Mary. We have nobody about us that cares for poetry, and who will rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? Perhaps if you encourage us to show you what we may write, we may do something now and then before we absolutely forget the quantity of an English line for want of practice. The 'Tobacco,' being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes) perhaps you will somehow convey it to him with my kind remembrances. Then, every body will have seen it that I wish to see it, I having sent it to Malta.

"I remain, dear W. and D., yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"28th September, 1805."

The following letter to Hazlitt, bears date 18th Nov. 1805.

TO MR. HAZLITT.

"Dear Hazlitt,—I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened, which are beneath the dig-



nity of epistolary communication, but which, seated about our fireside at night, (the winter hands of pork have begun,) gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about ——'s wife; for instance, how tall she is, and that she visits pranked up like a Queen of the May, with green streamers: a good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things too about Monkey,\* which can't so well be written: how it set up for a fine lady, and thought it had got lovers, and was obliged to be convinced of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an edict issued, that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace: these, and such like hows, were in my head to tell you, but who can write? Also how Manning is come to town in spectacles, and studies physic; is melancholy, and seems to have something in his head, which he don't impart. Then, how I am going to leave off smoking. O la! your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth

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\* The daughter of a friend, whom Lamb exceedingly liked from a child, and always called by this epithet.



water. I was hurried through the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed them. I had not settled my notions of beauty;—I have now for ever!—the small head, the long eye,—that sort of peering curve,—the wicked Italian mischief; the stick-at-nothing, Herodias' daughter-kind of grace. You understand me? But you disappoint me, in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Didn't you see it? Excuse a lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of note since, except Mr. D——'s gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way. For instance, Milton and Mr. D——. Mr. D—— has chosen to illustrate the story of Samson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy: the interview with the Jewish hero, blind and captive, and Dalilah. Milton has imagined his locks grown again, strong as horse-hair or porcupine's bristles; doubtless shaggy and black, as being hairs 'which, of a nation arm'd, contain'd the strength.' I don't remember he *says* black; but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr. D——, with striking originality of conception, has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like



Dyson's; in curl and quantity, resembling Mrs. P——'s; his limbs rather stout,—about such a man as my brother or Rickman,—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so long as Dubois, the clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact; for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British navy.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall-Mall, (I was prejudiced against him before,) looking just as a hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a great man we had. Nobody is left of any name at all. His secretary died by his side. I imagined him, a Mr. Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's; but I learn from Mrs. Hume that it is not the same. I met Mrs. H. one day and agreed to go on the Sunday to tea, but the rain prevented us and the distance. I have been to apologize, and we are to dine there the first fine Sunday! Strange perverseness. I never went while you staid here, and now I go to *find you*.



What other news is there, Mary? What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish of the comic. 'O! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send me the American Farmer. I dare say it is not so good as he fancies; but a book's a book.' I have not heard from Wordsworth or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters into possession to-morrow. We sup at 109 Russel-street, this evening. I wish your friend would not drink. It's a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play? Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian lady, a Leonardo one, nick-named the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, &c.—and questioned about seducing a duke from his wife and the state, makes answer:—

'Condemn you me for that the Duke did love me?  
So may you blame some fair and chrystal river,  
For that some melancholic distracted man  
Hath drown'd himself in it.'

"N. B. I shall expect a line from you, if but a bare line, whenever you write to Russel-street, and a letter often when you do not. I pay no postage. But I will have consideration for you until Parliament time and franks. Luck to Ned



Search and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her love : and Mary specially.

“Yours truly,

“C. LAMB.”

Lamb introduced Hazlitt to Godwin; and we find him early in the following year thus writing respecting the offer of Hazlitt's work to Johnson, and his literary pursuits.

TO MR. HAZLITT.

“Thursday, 15th Jan. 1806.

“Dear Hazlitt,—Godwin went to Johnson's yesterday about your business. Johnson would not come down, or give any answer, but has promised to open the manuscript, and to give you an answer in one month. Godwin will punctually go again (Wednesday is Johnson's open day) yesterday four weeks next: *i. e.* in one lunar month from this time. Till when, Johnson positively declines giving any answer. I wish you joy on ending your Search. Mrs. H. was naming something about a ‘Life of Fawcett,’ to be by you undertaken: the great Fawcett, as she explained to Manning when he asked ‘*What Fawcett?*’ He innocently thought *Fawcett the player*. But Fawcett the divine is known to many people, albeit un-



known to the Chinese enquirer. I should think, if you liked it, and Johnson declined it, that Phillips is the man. He is perpetually bringing out biographies, Richardson, Wilks, Foot, Lee Lewis, without number : little trim things in two easy volumes, price 12s. the two, made up of letters to and from, scraps, posthumous trifles, anecdotes, and about forty pages of hard biography ; you might dish up a Fawcettiad in three months and ask 60*l.* or 80*l.* for it. I dare say that Phillips would catch at it. I wrote you the other day in a great hurry. Did you get it? This is merely a letter of business at Godwin's request. Lord Nelson is quiet at last. His ghost only keeps a slight fluttering in odes and elegies in newspapers, and impromptus, which could not be got ready before the funeral.

“ As for news, —— is coming to town on Monday (if no kind angel intervene) to surrender himself to prison. He hopes to get the rules of the Fleet. On the same or nearly the same day, F—, my other quondam co-friend and drinker, will go to Newgate, and his wife and four children, I suppose, to the parish. Plenty of reflection and motives of gratitude to the wise Disposer of all things in us, whose prudent conduct has hitherto



ensured us a warm fire and snug roof over our heads. *Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia.* Alas! Prudentia is in the last quarter of her tutelary shining over me. A little time and I——; but maybe I may, at last, hit upon some mode of collecting some of the vast superfluities of this money-voiding town. Much is to be got, and I do not want much. All I ask is time and leisure; and I am cruelly off for them. When you have the inclination I shall be very glad to have a letter from you. Your brother and Mrs. H. I am afraid, think hardly of us for not coming oftener to see them, but we are distracted beyond what they can conceive with visitors and visitings. I never have an hour for my head to work quietly its own workings; which you know is as necessary to the human system as sleep. Sleep, too, I can't get for these winds of a night: and without sleep and rest what should ensue?

“Yours, dear H.,

“C. LAMB.”

TO MR. HAZLITT.

“Dear H.—Godwin has just been here in his way from Johnson's. Johnson has had a fire in



his house, this happened about five weeks ago ; it was in the day time so it did not burn the house down, but it did so much damage that the house must come down, to be repaired. His nephew that we met on Hampstead Hill put it out. Well, this fire has put him so back, that he craves one more month before he gives you an answer. I will certainly goad Godwin (if necessary) to go again this very day four weeks ; but I am confident he will want no goading. Three or four most capital auctions of pictures advertised in May, *Wellbore Ellis Agar's*, the first private collection in England, so Holcroft says. In March Sir George Young's in Stratford-place (where Cosway lives), and a Mr. Hulse's at Blackheath, both very capital collections, and have been announced for some months. Also the Marquis of Lansdown's pictures in March ; and though inferior to mention, lastly, the Dulwich Gallery. Don't your mouth water to be here ? T' other night Loftus called, whom we have not seen since you went before. We meditate a stroll next Wednesday, fast day. He happened to light upon Mr. Holcroft, wife, and daughter, their first visit at our house. Your brother called last night. We keep up our intimacy. He is going to begin



a large Madonna and child from Mrs. H. and baby. I fear he goes astray after *ignes fatui*. He is a clever man. By-the-by I saw a miniature of his as far excelling any in his show cupboard (that of your sister not excepted) as that show cupboard excels the show things you see in windows—an old woman—hang her name—but most superlative; he has it to clean—I'll ask him the name—but the best miniature I ever saw. But for oil pictures!—what has he to do with Madonnas?—if the Virgin Mary were alive and visitable, he would not hazard himself in a Covent-Garden-pit-crowd to see her. It an't his style of beauty, is it? But he will go on painting things he ought not to paint, and not painting things he ought to paint. Manning not gone to China, but talks of going this spring. God forbid. Coleridge not heard of. I am going to leave off smoke. In the meantime I am so smoky with last night's ten pipes, that I must leave off. Mary begs her kind remembrances. Pray write to us. This is no letter, but I supposed you grew anxious about Johnson.

“N.B. Have taken a room at three shillings a-week, to be in between five and eight at night, to avoid my *nocturnal*, alias *knock-eternal* visitors. The first fruits of my retirement has been a farce which



to manager to-morrow. *Wish my ticket luck.* God bless you, and do write.

“Yours, *fumosissimus*,

“C. LAMB.

“Wednesday, 19th Feb. 1806.”

The farce referred to in the foregoing letter, is the delightful *jeu-d'esprit*, “MR. H.” destined to only one nights’ stage existence, but to become “a good jest for ever.” It must be confessed that it has not substance enough for a dramatic piece in two acts—a piece which must present a show of real interest—involve its pair of young lovers in actual perplexities—and terminate in the seriousness of marriage! It would be rare sport in Milton’s “Limbo of Vanity,” but is too airy for the ponderous sentimentalism of the modern school of farce. As Swift, in “Gulliver,” brings every thing to the standard of size, so in this farce every thing is reduced to an alphabetical standard. Humour is sent to school to learn its letters; or, rather, letters are made instinct with the most delicate humour. It is the apotheosis of the alphabet, and teaches the value of a good name without the least hint of moral purpose. This mere pleasantry—this refining on sounds and letters—this verbal



banter, and watery collision of the pale reflexions of words, could not succeed on a stage which had begun to require interest, moral or immoral, to be interwoven with the web of all its actions; which no longer rejoiced in the riot of animal spirits and careless gaiety; which no longer permitted wit to take the sting from evil, as well as the load from care; but infected even its prince of rakes, Charles Surface, with a cant of sentiment which makes us turn for relief to the more honest hypocrite his brother. MR. H. "could never *do*;" but its composition was pleasant, and its acceptance gave Lamb some of the happiest moments he ever spent. Thus he announces it to Wordsworth, in reply to a letter communicating to him that the poet was a father.

## TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Dear Wordsworth,—We are pleased, you may be sure, with the good news of Mrs. W——. Hope all is well over by this time. 'A fine boy!—have you any more?—one more and a girl—poor copies of me!' *vide* MR. H. a farce which the proprietors have done me the honour; but I will set down Mr. Wroughton's own words. N.B. The ensuing letter was sent in answer to one which I wrote, begging to know if my piece had any



chance, as I might make alterations, &c. I, writing on the Monday, there comes this letter on the Wednesday. Attend!

[Copy of a Letter from Mr. R. Wroughton.]

‘ Sir,—Your piece of Mr. H., I am desired to say, is accepted at Drury-Lane Theatre, by the proprietors, and, if agreeable to you, will be brought forwards when the proper opportunity serves. The piece shall be sent to you, for your alterations, in the course of a few days, as the same is not in my hands, but with the proprietors.

‘ I am, sir, your obedient servant,

‘ RICHARD WROUGHTON.

[Dated]

‘ 66, Gower Street,

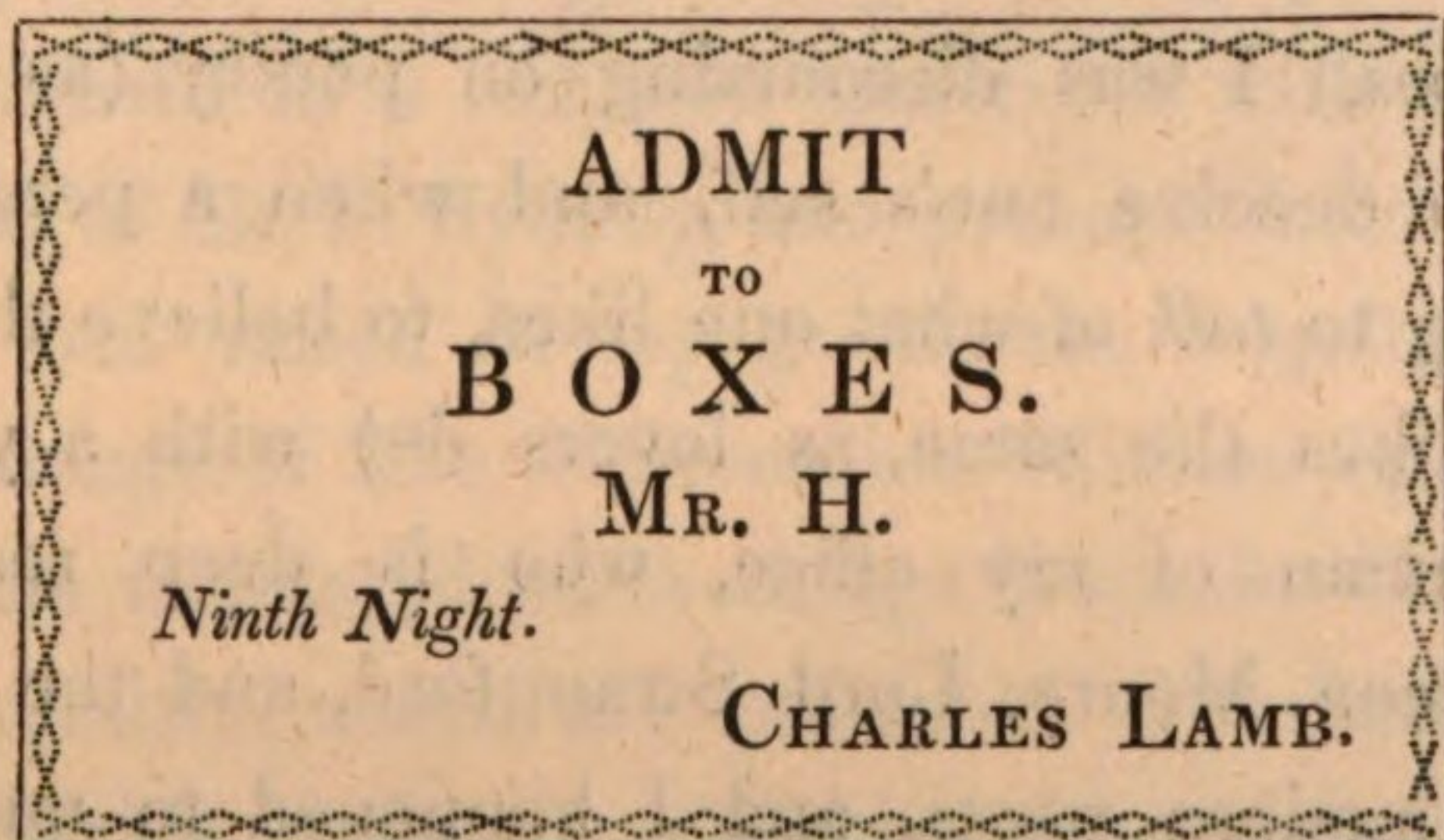
‘ Wednesday, June 11, 1806.’

“ On the following Sunday Mr. T. comes. The scent of a manager’s letter brought him. He would have gone further any day on such a business. I read the letter to him. He deems it authentic and peremptory. Our conversation naturally fell upon pieces, different sorts of pieces; what is the best way of offering a piece, how far the caprice of managers is an obstacle in the way of a piece, how to judge of the merits of a piece,



how long a piece may remain in the hands of the managers before it is acted; and my piece, and your piece, and my poor brother's piece—my poor brother was all his life endeavouring to get a piece accepted.

“ I wrote that, in mere wantonness of triumph. Have nothing more to say about it. The managers, I thank my stars, have decided its merits for ever. They are the best judges of pieces, and it would be insensible in me to affect a false modesty after the very flattering letter which I have received.



“ I think this will be as good a pattern for orders as I can think on. A little thin flowery border, round, neat, not gaudy, and the Drury-Lane Apollo, with the harp at the top. Or shall I have no Apollo?—simply nothing? Or perhaps the comic muse?



“The same form, only I think without the Apollo, will serve for the pit and galleries. I think it will be best to write my name at full length; but then if I give away a great many, that will be tedious. Perhaps *Ch. Lamb* will do.

“BOXES, now I think on it, I'll have in capitals. The rest, in a neat Italian hand. Or better, perhaps, ~~Boxes~~ in old English characters, like Madoc or Thalaba?

\* \* \* \*

“*A-propos* of Spenser (you will find him mentioned a page or two before, near enough for an *à-propos*,) I was discoursing on poetry (as one's apt to deceive one's self, and when a person is willing to *talk* of what one likes, to believe that he also likes the same, as lovers do) with a young gentleman of my office, who is deep read in Anacreon Moore, Lord Strangford, and the principal modern poets, and I happened to mention Epithalamiums, and that I could show him a very fine one of Spenser's. At the mention of this, my gentleman, who is a very fine gentleman, pricked up his ears and expressed great pleasure, and begged that I would give him leave to copy it: he did not care how long it was (for I objected the length,) he should be very happy to see *any thing*



*by him.* Then pausing, and looking sad, he ejaculated ‘POOR SPENCER!’ I begged to know the reason of this ejaculation, thinking that time had by this time softened down any calamities which the bard might have endured. ‘Why, poor fellow!’ said he, ‘he has lost his wife!’ ‘Lost his wife!’ said I, ‘who are you talking of?’ ‘Why, Spencer!’ said he, ‘I’ve read the ‘Monody’ he wrote on the occasion, and *a very pretty thing it is.* This led to an explanation (it could be delayed no longer,) that the sound Spenser, which, when poetry is talked off, generally excites an image of an old bard in a ruff, and sometimes with it dim notions of Sir P. Sydney, and perhaps Lord Burleigh, had raised in my gentleman a quite contrary image of The Honourable William Spencer, who has translated some things from the German very prettily, which are published with Lady Di. Beauclerk’s designs. Nothing like defining of terms when we talk. What blunders might I have fallen into of quite inapplicable criticism, but for this timely explanation.

“N.B. At the beginning of *Edm. Spenser*, (to prevent mistakes) I have copied from my own copy, and primarily from a book of Chalmers’ on Shakspeare, a sonnet of Spenser’s never printed



among his poems. It is curious as being manly and rather Miltonic, and as a sonnet of Spenser's with nothing in it about love or knighthood. I have no room for remembrances; but I hope our doing your commission will prove we do not quite forget you. "C. L."

The interval between the completion of the farce, "and its first acting," though full of bright hopes of dramatic success, was not all a phantasm. The following two letters to Mr. Rickman, now one of the Clerks of the House of Commons, show Lamb's unwearied kindness.

TO MR. RICKMAN.

"Dear Rickman,—You do not happen to have any place at your disposal which would suit a decayed man of letters? I do not much expect that you have, or that you will go much out of your way to serve the object, when you hear it is F. But the case is, by a *mistaking* of his *turn*, as they call it, he is reduced, I am afraid, to extremities, and would be extremely glad of a place in an office. Now, it does sometimes happen, that just as a man wants a place, a place wants him; and though this is a lottery to which none but G. B.



would chuse to trust his all, there is no harm just to call in at Despair's office for a friend, and see if *his* number is come up (B.'s further case I enclose by way of episode). Now, if you should happen, or any body you know, to want a *hand*, here is a young man of solid but not brilliant genius, who would turn his hand to the making out dockets, penning a manifesto, or scoring a tally, not the worse (I hope) for knowing Latin and Greek, and having in youth conversed with the philosophers. But from these follies, I believe he is thoroughly awakened, and would bind himself by a terrible oath never to imagine himself an extraordinary genius again.

“Yours, &c.

“C. LAMB.”

TO MR. RICKMAN.

“Dear Rickman,—I send you some papers about a salt-water soap, for which the inventor is desirous of getting a parliamentary reward, like Dr. Jenner. Whether such a prospect be feasible, I mainly doubt, taking for granted the equal utility. I should suppose the usual way of paying such projectors is by patents and contracts. The patent, you see, he has got. A contract he is about with



the navy board. Meantime, the projector is hungry. Will you answer me two questions, and return them with the papers as soon as you can? Imprimis, is there any chance of success in application to Parliament for a reward? Did you ever hear of the invention? You see its benefits and saving to the nation (always the first motive with a true projector) are feelingly set forth: the last paragraph but one of the estimate, in enumerating the shifts poor seamen are put to, even approaches the pathetic. But, agreeing to all he says, is there the remotest chance of Parliament giving the projector any thing; and *when* should application be made, now or after a report (if he can get it), from the navy board? Secondly, let the infeasibility be as great as you will, you will oblige me by telling me the way of introducing such an application in parliament, without buying over a majority of members, which is totally out of projectors' power. I vouch nothing for the soap myself; for I always wash in *fresh water*, and find it answer tolerably well for all purposes of cleanliness; nor do I know the projector; but a relation of mine has put me on writing to you, for whose parliamentary knowledge he has great veneration..

“ P.S. The Capt. and Mrs. Burney and Phillips



take their chance at cribbage here on Wednesday. Will you and Mrs. R. join the party? Mary desires her compliments to Mrs. R., and joins in the invitation.

“Yours truly,

“C. LAMB.

“Monday.”

Before the production of Mr. H., Lamb was obliged, in sad earnest, to part from Manning, who, after talking and thinking about China for years, took the heroic resolution of going thither, not to acquire wealth or fame, but to realise the phantom of his restless thought. Happy was he to have a friend, like Mr. Burney, to indulge and to soften his grief, which he thus expresses in his first letter to his friend.

TO MR. MANNING.

“My dear Manning,—I didn’t know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then ’twas just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold; and, when you are down the ladder, you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there’s nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what



it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony, and then——. Martin Burney *took me out* a walking that evening, and we talked of Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you, and at twelve o'clock came home Mary and Monkey Louisa from the play, and there was more talk and more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have staid so long I shall never be able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr. Dawe, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little mandarin for our mantel-piece, as a companion to the child I am going to purchase at the museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is



doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakespeare's plays, to be made into children's tales. Six are already done by her, to wit, 'The Tempest,' 'Winter's Tale,' 'Midsummer Night,' 'Much Ado,' 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and 'Cymbeline;' and the 'Merchant of Venice' is in forwardness. I have done 'Othello' and 'Macbeth,' and mean to do all the tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people, besides money. It's to bring in sixty guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think, you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous pagan anthropophagi. *Quam homo homini præstat!* but then, perhaps, you'll get murder'd, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people, whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. O! Manning, I am serious to sinking almost, when I think that all those evenings, which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years, you talk of, may be ten, and you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstances may grow up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such inti-



macy. I dare say all this is hum ! and that all will come back ; but, indeed, we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me : like a legacy.

“ God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May he give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

“ Good bye,

“ C. L.”

Christmas approached, and Lamb then conveyed to Manning, now at the antipodes, news of poor Holcroft's failure in his play of “ The Vindictive Man,” and his own approaching trial.



TO MR. MANNING.

" 5th December, 1806.

" Manning, your letter dated Hottentots, August the what-was-it? came to hand. I can scarce hope that mine will have the same luck. China—Canton—bless us—how it strains the imagination and makes it ache! I write under another uncertainty whether it can go to-morrow by a ship which I have just learned is going off direct to your part of the world, or whether the despatches may not be sealed up and this have to wait, for if it is detained here, it will grow staler in a fortnight than in a five months' voyage coming to you. It will be a point of conscience to send you none but bran new news (the latest edition) which will but grow the better like oranges for a sea voyage. O that you should be so many hemispheres off—if I speak incorrectly you can correct me—why the simplest death or marriage that takes place here must be important to you as news in the old Bastille. There's your friend Tuthill has got away from France—you remember France? and Tuthill?—ten-to-one but he writes by this post, if he don't get my note in time, apprising him of the vessel sailing. Know then that he has found



means to obtain leave from Bonaparte, without making use of any *incredible romantic pretences* as some have done, who never meant to fulfil them, to come home, and I have seen him here and at Holcroft's. An't you glad about Tuthill? Now then be sorry for Holcroft, whose new play, called 'The Vindictive Man,' was damned about a fortnight since. It died in part of its own weakness, and in part for being choked up with bad actors. The two principal parts were destined to Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Bannister, but Mrs. J. has not come to terms with the managers, they have had some squabble, and Bannister shot some of his fingers off by the going off of a gun. So Miss Duncan had her part, and Mr. De Camp took his. His part, the principal comic hope of the play, was most unluckily Goldfinch taken out of the 'Road to Ruin,' not only the same character but the identical Goldfinch—the same as Falstaff is in two plays of Shakspeare—as the devil of ill-luck would have it, half the audience did not know that H. had written it, but were displeased at his stealing from the 'Road to Ruin;' and those who might have borne a gentlemanly coxcomb with his 'That's your sort,' 'Go it,'—such as Lewis is—did not relish the intolerable vulgarity and inanity



of the idea stript of his manner. De Camp was hooted, more than hist, hooted and bellowed off the stage before the second act was finished, so that the remainder of his part was forced to be, with some violence to the play, omitted. In addition to this, a woman of the town was another principal character—a most unfortunate choice in this moral day. The audience were as scandalized as if you were to introduce such a personage to their private tea-tables. Besides, her action in the play was gross—wheedling an old man into marriage. But the mortal blunder of the play was that which, oddly enough, H. took pride in, and exultingly told me of the night before it came out, that there were no less than eleven principal characters in it, and I believe he meant of the men only, for the playbill exprest as much, not reckoning one woman—and true it was, for Mr. Powell, Mr. Raymond, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. H. Siddons, Mr. Barrymore, &c., &c.—to the number of eleven, had all parts equally prominent, and there was as much of them in quantity and rank as of the hero and heroine—and most of them gentlemen who seldom appear but as the hero's friend in a farce—for a minute or two—and here they all had their ten minute speeches, and one of them gave



the audience a serious account how he was now a lawyer but had been a poet, and then a long enumeration of the inconveniencies of authorship, rascally booksellers, reviewers, &c. ; which first set the audience a gaping ; but I have said enough. You will be so sorry, that you will not think the best of me for my detail ; but news is news at Canton. Poor H. I fear will feel the disappointment very seriously in a pecuniary light. What if he should be obliged to part with his long-necked Guido that hangs opposite as you enter, and the game-piece that hangs in the back drawing-room, and all those Vandykes, &c. ? God should temper the wind to the shorn connoisseur. I hope I need not say to you, that I feel for the weather-beaten author, and for all his household. I assure you his fate has soured a good deal the pleasure I should have otherwise taken in my own little farce being accepted, and I hope about to be acted—it is in rehearsal actually, and I expect it to come out next week. It is kept a sort of secret and the rehearsals have gone on privately, lest by many folks knowing it, the story should come out, which would infallibly damn it. You remember I had sent it before you went. Wroughton read it and was much pleased with it.



I speedily got an answer. I took it to make alterations, and lazily kept it some months, then took courage and furbished it up in a day or two and took it. In less than a fortnight I heard the principal part was given to Elliston, who liked it and only wanted a prologue, which I have since done and sent, and I had a note the day before yesterday from the manager, Wroughton (bless his fat face—he is not a bad actor in some things), to say that I should be summoned to the rehearsal after the next, which next was to be yesterday. I had no idea it was so forward. I have had no trouble, attended no reading or rehearsal, made no interest; what a contrast to the usual parade of authors! But it is peculiar to modesty to do all things without noise or pomp! I have some suspicion it will appear in public on Wednesday next, for W. says in his note, it is so forward that if wanted it may come out next week, and a new melo-drame is announced for every day till then; and a “new farce is in rehearsal,” is put up in the bills. Now you’d like to know the subject. The title is “Mr. H.” no more; how simple, how taking! A great H sprawling over the play bill and attracting eyes at every corner. The story is a coxcomb appearing at Bath, vastly rich—all the ladies dying for him



—all bursting to know who he is—but he goes by no other name than Mr. H.—a curiosity like that of the dames of Strasburg about the man with the great nose. But I won't tell you any more about it. Yes I will : but I can't give you an idea how I have done it. I'll just tell you that after much vehement admiration, when his true name comes out, "Hogsflesh," all the women shun him, avoid him, and not one can be found to change their name for him—that's the idea—how flat it is here—but how whimsical in the farce! And only think how hard upon me it is that the ship is dispatched to-morrow, and my triumph cannot be ascertained till the Wednesday after—but all China will ring of it by and by. N. B. (But this is a secret) The Professor has got a tragedy coming out with the young Roscius in it in January next, as we say, January last it will be with you—and though it is a profound secret now, as all his affairs are, it cannot be much of one by the time you read this. However, don't let it go any further. I understand there are dramatic exhibitions in China. One would not like to be forestalled. Do you find in all this stuff I have written any thing like those feelings which one should send my old adventuring friend, that is gone to wander among Tartars and



may never come again? I don't—but your going away, and all about you is a thread-bare topic. I have worn it out with thinking—it has come to me when I have been dull with any thing, till my sadness has seemed more to have come from it than to have introduced it. I want you, you don't know how much—but if I had you here in my European garret, we should but talk over such stuff as I have written—so—Those 'Tales from Shakspeare' are coming out, and Mary has begun a new work. Mr. Dawe is turned author, he has been in such a way lately—Dawe the painter, I mean—he sits and stands about at Holcroft's, and says nothing—then sighs and leans his head on his hand. I took him to be in love—but it seems he was only meditating a work,—'The Life of Morland,'—the young man is not used to composition. Rickman and Captain Burney are well; they assemble at my house pretty regularly of a Wednesday—a new institution. Like other great men, I have a public day, cribbage and pipes, with Phillips and noisy —.

“Good Heaven! what a bit only I've got left! How shall I squeeze all I know into this morsel! Coleridge is come home, and is going to turn lecturer on taste at the Royal Institution. I shall



get 200*l.* from the theatre if Mr. H. has a good run, and I hope 100*l.* for the copyright. Nothing, if it fails; and there never was a more ticklish thing. The whole depends on the manner in which the name is brought out, which I value myself on, as a *chef-d'œuvre*. How the paper grows less and less! In less than two minutes I shall cease to talk to you, and you may rave to the great Wall of China. N.B. Is there such a wall? Is it as big as Old London Wall, by Bedlam? Have you met with a friend of mine, named Ball, at Canton?—if you are acquainted, remember me kindly to him. N.B. If my little thing don't succeed, I shall easily survive, having, as it were, compared to H.'s venture, but a sixteenth in the lottery. Mary and I are to sit next the orchestra in the pit, next the tweedle-dees. She remembers you. You are more to us than five hundred farces, clappings, &c.

“Come back one day.

“C. LAMB.”

Wednesday, 10th December, 1806, was the wished-for evening which decided the fate of “Mr. H.” on the boards of Drury. Great curiosity was excited by the announcement; the house was



crowded to the ceiling; and the audience impatiently awaited the conclusion of the long, dull, intolerable opera of “The Travellers,” by which it was preceded. At length Mr. Elliston, the hero of the farce, entered, gaily dressed, and in happiest spirits,—enough, not too much, elated,—and delivered the prologue with great vivacity and success. The farce began; at first it was much applauded; but the wit seemed wire-drawn; and when the curtain fell on the first act, the friends of the author began to fear. The second act dragged heavily on, as second acts of farces will do; a rout at Bath, peopled with ill-dressed and over-dressed actors and actresses, increased the disposition to yawn; and when the moment of disclosure came, and nothing worse than the name *Hogsflesh* was heard, the audience resented the long play on their curiosity, and would hear no more. Lamb, with his sister, sat, as he anticipated, in the front of the pit, and having joined in encoring the epilogue, the brilliancy of which injured the farce, he gave way with equal pliancy to the common feeling, and hissed and hooted as loudly as any of his neighbours. The next morning’s playbill contained a veracious announcement, that “*the new farce of Mr. H., performed for the*



*first time last night, was received by an overflowing audience with universal applause, and will be repeated for the second time to-morrow ;*" but the stage lamps never that morrow saw ! Elliston would have tried it again ; but Lamb saw at once that the case was hopeless, and consoled his friends with a century of puns for the wreck of his dramatic hopes.



## CHAPTER IX.

[1807 to 1814.]

LETTERS TO MANNING, MONTAGUE, WORDSWORTH,  
AND COLERIDGE.

FROM this period, the letters of Lamb which have been preserved are comparatively few, with reference to the years through which they are scattered. He began to write in earnest for the press, and the time thus occupied was withdrawn from his correspondents, while his thoughts and feelings were developed by a different excitement, and expressed in other forms. In the year 1807 the series of stories founded on the plays of Shakespeare, referred to in his last letter to Manning, was published; in which the outline of his plots are happily brought within the apprehension of children, and his language preserved wherever it was pos-



sible to retain it;—a fit counterpoise to these works addressed to the young understanding, to which Lamb still cherished the strong distaste which broke out in one of his previous letters. Of these tales, King Lear, Macbeth, Timon of Athens, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and Othello, are by Charles, and the others by Mary Lamb; hers being, as Lamb always insisted, the most felicitous, but all well adapted to infuse some sense of the nobleness of the poet's thoughts into the hearts of their little readers. Of two other works preparing for the press, he thus speaks in a letter, which bears date 26th February, 1808, addressed to Manning, at Canton, in reply to a letter received thence, in which Manning informed Lamb, that he had consigned a parcel of silk to a Mr. Knox for him.

TO MR. MANNING.

“Dear Missionary,—Your letters from the farthest ends of the world have arrived safe. Mary is very thankful for your remembrance of her; and with the less suspicion of mercenariness, as the silk, the *symbolum materiale* of your friendship, has not yet appeared. I think Horace says some-



where, *nox longa*. I would not impute negligence or unhandsome delays to a person whom you have honoured with your confidence, but I have not heard of the silk, or of Mr. Knox, save by your letter. Maybe he expects the first advances ! or it may be that he has not succeeded in getting the article on shore, for it is among the *res prohibitæ et non nisi smuggle-ationis viâ fruendæ*. But so it is, in the friendships between *wicked men*, the very expressions of their good-will cannot but be sinful. I suppose you know my farce was damned. The noise still rings in my ears. Was you ever in the pillory ?—being damned is something like that. A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. Little Fenwick (you don't see the connexion of ideas here, how the devil should you ?) is in the rules of the Fleet. Cruel creditors ! operation of iniquitous laws ! is Magna Charta then a mockery ? Why, in general (here I suppose you to ask a question) my spirits are pretty good, but I have my depressions, black as a smith's beard, Vulcanic, Stygian. At such times I have recourse to a pipe, which is like not being at home to a dun ; he comes again with



tenfold bitterness the next day.—(Mind, I am not in debt, I only borrow a similitude from others; it shows imagination). I have done two books since the failure of my farce, they will both be out this summer. The one is a juvenile book—‘The Adventures of Ulysses,’ intended to be an introduction to the reading of Telemachus! it is done out of the Odyssey, not from the Greek. I would not mislead you: nor yet from Pope’s Odyssey, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The ‘Shakspeare Tales’ suggested the doing it. Godwin is in both those cases my bookseller. The other is done for Longman, and is ‘Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakspeare.’ Specimens are becoming fashionable. We have—‘Specimens of Ancient English Poets’—‘Specimens of Modern English Poets’—‘Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers,’ without end. They used to be called ‘Beauties.’ You have seen ‘Beauties of Shakspeare?’ so have many people that never saw any beauties in Shakspeare. Longman is to print it, and be at all the expense and risk, and I am to share the profits after all deductions, *i. e.* a year or two hence I must pocket what they please to tell me is due to



me. But the book is such as I am glad there should be. It is done out of old plays at the Museum, and out of Dodsley's collection, &c. It is to have notes. So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury-lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Hang 'em how they hissed ! it was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring sometimes like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely, to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with, and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them ! Heaven be pleased to make the teeth rot



out of them all, therefore! Make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them! Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them. Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. O that you could go to the new opera of Kais to-night! 'Tis all about eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervises, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You needn't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as I do every night at Drury-lane Theatre. Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs. Siddons', or Mr. Kemble's acting; and when it is not impassioned, it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew! I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who grinned like a Cheshire cat. (Why do cats grin in Cheshire?—Because it was once a county palatine, and the cats cannot help laughing whenever they think of it, though I see no great joke in it.) I said that Holcroft said, being asked who were the best dramatic writers of the day, 'Hook



AND I.' Mr. Hook is author of several pieces, Tekeli, &c. You know what *hooks and eyes* are, don't you? Your letter had many things in it hard to be understood, the puns were ready and Swift-like; but don't you begin to be melancholy in the midst of Eastern customs! 'The mind does not easily conform to foreign usages, even in trifles: it requires something that it has been familiar with.' That begins one of Dr. Hawkesworth's papers in the *Adventurer*, and is, I think, as sensible a remark as ever fell from the Doctor's mouth. White is at Christ's Hospital, a wit of the first magnitude, but had rather be thought a gentleman, like Congreve. You know Congreve's repulse which he gave to Voltaire, when he came to visit him as a *literary man*, that he wished to be considered only in the light of a private gentleman. I think the impertinent Frenchman was properly answered. I should just serve any member of the French Institute in the same manner, that wished to be introduced to me.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Does any one read at Canton? Lord Moira is President of the Westminster Library. I suppose you might have interest with Sir Joseph



Banks to get to be president of any similar institution that should be set up at Canton. I think public reading rooms the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the head-ache. Besides, who knows that you *do* read? There are ten thousand institutions similar to the Royal Institution which have sprung up from it. There is the London Institution, the Southwark Institution, the Russell-square Rooms Institution, &c.—*College quasi Con-lege*, a place where people read together. Wordsworth, the great poet, is coming to town; he is to have apartments in the Mansion-House. Well, my dear Manning, talking cannot be infinite; I have said all I have to say; the rest is but remembrances, which we shall bear in our heads of you while we have heads. Here is a packet of trifles nothing worth; but it is a trifling part of the world where I live; emptiness abounds. But in fulness of affection we remain yours,

“C. L.”

The two books referred to in this letter were shortly after published. “The Adventures of Ulysses” had some tinge of the quaintness of Chap-



man; it gives the plot of the earliest and one of the most charming of romances, without spoiling its interest. The "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the Time of Shakspeare," were received with more favour than Lamb's previous works, though it was only by slow and imperceptible degrees that they won their way to the apprehensions of the most influential minds, and wrought out the genial purpose of the editor in renewing a taste for the great cotemporaries of Shakspeare. "The Monthly Review" vouchsafed a notice\* in its large print, upon the whole favourable, according to the existing fashion of criticism, but still "craftily qualified." It will scarcely be credited, without reference to the article itself, that on the notes the critic pronounces this judgment: "The notes before us indeed have nothing very remarkable, except the style, which is formally abrupt and elaborately quaint. Some of the most studied attempts to display excessive feeling we had noted for animadversion, but the task is unnecessary," &c.

It is easy to conceive of readers strongly dissenting from some of the passionate eulogies of these notes, and even taking offence at the boldness of

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\* April, 1809.



the allusions; but that any one should read these essences of criticism, suggesting the profoundest thoughts, and replete throughout with fine imagery, and find in them "nothing remarkable," is a mystery which puzzles us. But when the same critic speaks of the heroine of the "Broken Heart" as "the light-heeled Calantha," it is easy to appreciate his fitness for sitting in judgment on the old English drama and the congenial expositor of its grandeurs!

In this year Miss Lamb published her charming work, entitled "Mrs. Leicester's School," to which Lamb contributed three of the tales. The best, however, are his sister's, as he delighted to insist; and no tales more happily adapted to nurture all sweet and child-like feelings in children were ever written. Another joint-publication, "Poetry for Children," followed, which also is worthy of its title.

Early in 1809, Lamb removed from Mitre-court Buildings to Southampton Buildings, but only for a few months, and preparatory to a settlement (which he meant to be final) in the Temple. The next letter to Manning, (still in China,) of 28th March, 1809, is from Southampton Buildings.



## TO MR. MANNING.

—— “ So there is one of your friends whom you will never see again ! Perhaps the next fleet may bring you a letter from Martin Burney, to say that he writes by desire of Miss Lamb, who is not well enough to write herself, to inform you that her brother died on Thursday last, 14th June, &c. But I hope *not*. I should be sorry to give occasion to open a correspondence between Martin and you. This letter must be short, for I have driven it off to the very moment of doing up the packets ; and besides, that which I refer to above, is a very long one ; and if you have received my books, you will have enough to do to read them. While I think on it, let me tell you, we are moved. Don't come any more to Mitre-court Buildings. We are at 34, Southampton Buildings, Chancery-lane, and shall be here till about the end of May, then we remove to No. 4, Inner Temple-lane, where I mean to live and die ; for I have such horror of moving, that I would not take a benefice from the King, if I was not indulged with non-residence. What a dislocation of comfort is com-



prised in that word moving! Such a heap of little nasty things, after you think all is got into the cart; old dredging-boxes, worn-out brushes, gallipots, vials, things that it is impossible the most necessitous person can ever want, but which the women, who preside on these occasions, will not leave behind if it was to save your soul; they'd keep the cart ten minutes to stow in dirty pipes and broken matches, to show their economy. Then you can find nothing you want for many days after you get into your new lodgings. You must comb your hair with your fingers, wash your hands without soap, go about in dirty gaiters. Was I Diogenes, I would not move out of a kilderkin into a hogshead, though the first had nothing but small beer in it, and the second reeked claret. Our place of final destination,—I don't mean the grave, but No. 4, Inner Temple-lane,—looks out upon a gloomy churchyard-like court, called Hare-court, with three trees and a pump in it. Do you know it? I was born near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old. If you see newspapers you will read about Mrs. Clarke. The sensation in London about this nonsensical business is marvellous. I remember nothing in my



life like it. Thousands of ballads, caricatures, lives of Mrs. Clarke, in every blind alley. Yet in the midst of this stir, a sublime abstracted dancing-master, who attends a family we know at Kensington, being asked a question about the progress of the examinations in the House, inquired who Mrs. Clarke was? He had heard nothing of it. He had evaded this omnipresence by utter insignificance! The Duke should make that man his confidential valet. I proposed locking him up, barring him the use of his fiddle and red pumps, until he had minutely perused and committed to memory the whole body of the examinations, which employed the House of Commons a fortnight, to teach him to be more attentive to what concerns the public. I think I told you of Godwin's little book, and of Coleridge's prospectus, in my last; if I did not, remind me of it, and I will send you them, or an account of them, next fleet. I have no conveniency of doing it by this. Mrs. — grows every day in disfavour with me. I will be buried with this inscription over me:—'Here lies C. L., the woman-hater:' I mean, that hated one woman: for the rest, God bless them! How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with



any of them? This is Wednesday. On Wednesdays is my levee. The Captain, Martin, Phillips, (not the Sheriff,) Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visitors. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses smokes. Why do you never drop in? You'll come some day, won't you?

“C. LAMB, &c.”

His next is after his removal to the Temple.

TO MR. MANNING.

“Dear Manning,—When I last wrote you, I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner-Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them, but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous mode which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c. rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of



Hogarth, an English painter, of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small, but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent cold, with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to Mrs. 'Leicester;' the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's; you may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life; I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Doctor Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour; and to give them some idea of the difference of



rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1. Mr. C. Lamb; 2. C. Lamb, Esq.; 3. Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4. Baron Lamb of Stamford;\* 5. Viscount Lamb; 6. Earl Lamb; 7. Marquis Lamb; 8. Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country, otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing. Puns I have not made many, (nor punch much) since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral, upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (Turkey in Europe, and Turkey in

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\* “Where my family came from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice.”



Asia,) that I can't jog on. It is New-year here. That is, it was New-year half-a-year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space, and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill, at half-past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters besides my own three into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root. I think you said you did not know Kate \* \* \* \* \*. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly numbers, called the 'Friend,' which I would send, if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before



deters me; and you 'll want something new to read when you come home. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the queen on her coronation day; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen: I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth—

‘She’s sweet fifteen,  
I’m *one year more.*’

“Mrs. Bland sung it in boy’s clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs. Bland’s. That glorious singer, Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel, yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which preponderated; but he is gone, and one —— is engaged instead. Kate is vanished, but Miss B—— is always to be met with!

‘Queens drop away, while blue-legged Maukin thrives;  
And courtly Mildred dies while country Madge survives.’

That is not my poetry, but Quarles’s; but hav’nt you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don’t show any body the names in this letter. I



write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private*. Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin; Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language, but the *grey mare is the better horse*. I don't allude to Mrs. —, but to the word *grammar*, which comes near to *grey mare*, if you observe, in sound. That figure is called paranomasia in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. 'Ah! sir,' said she, 'I have seen better days;' 'So have I, good woman,' I replied; but I meant literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Mr. Dawe is made associate of the Royal Academy. By what law of association I can't guess. Mrs. Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Martin and Louisa, Mrs. Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs. Burney, Martin Burney, Mr. Rickman, Mrs. Rickman, Dr. Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, Mr. Fenwick, Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you; Mrs. Buffam that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr. Tuthill, Mrs. Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Collier, Mrs. Collier, Mr. Sutton,



Nurse, Mr. Fell, Mrs. Fell, Mr. Marshall, are very well, and occasionally enquire after you.

“I remain yours ever,

“CH. LAMB.

“2nd January, 1810.”

In the summer of 1810, Lamb and his sister spent their holidays with Hazlitt, who, having married Miss Stoddart, was living in a house belonging to his wife's family at Winterslow, on the border of Salisbury Plain. The following letter, of 12th July, in this year, was addressed to Mr. Montague, who had urged him to employ a part of his leisure in a compilation.

TO MR. MONTAGUE.

“Dear Montague,—I have turned and twisted the MSS. in my head, and can make nothing of them. I knew when I took them that I could not, but I do not like to do an act of ungracious necessity at once; so I am ever committing myself by half engagements, and total failures. I cannot make any body understand why I can't do such things; it is a defect in my occiput. I cannot put other people's thoughts together; I forget every paragraph as fast as I read it; and my head has re-



ceived such a shock by an all-night journey on the top of the coach, that I shall have enough to do to nurse it into its natural pace before I go home. I must devote myself to imbecility; I must be gloriously useless while I stay here. How is Mrs. M.? will she pardon my inefficiency? The city of Salisbury is full of weeping and wailing. The bank has stopt payment; and every body in the town kept money at it, or has got some of its notes. Some have lost all they had in the world. It is the next thing to seeing a city with the plague within its walls. The Wilton people are all undone; all the manufacturers there kept cash at the Salisbury bank; and I do suppose it to be the unhappiest county in England this, where I am making holiday. We purpose setting out for Oxford Tuesday fortnight, and coming thereby home. But no more night travelling. My head is sore (understand it of the inside) with that deduction from my natural rest which I suffered coming down. Neither Mary nor I can spare a morsel of our rest; it is incumbent on us to be misers of it. Travelling is not good for us, we travel so seldom. If the sun be hell, it is not for the fire, but for the sempiternal motion of that miserable body of light. How much more dignified leisure



hath a muscle glued to his unpassable rocky limit, two inch square ! He hears the tide roll over him, backwards and forwards twice a-day (as the Salisbury long coach goes and returns in eight-and-forty hours), but knows better than to take an outside night-place a top on't. He is the owl of the sea—Minerva's fish—the fish of wisdom.

“ Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. M.’

“ Yours truly,

“ C. LAMB.”

The following is Lamb's postscript to a letter of Miss Lamb to Miss Wordsworth, after their return to London :

“ Mary has left a little space for me to fill up with nonsense, as the geographers used to cram monsters in the voids of the maps, and call it Terra Incognita. She has told you how she has taken to water like a hungry otter. I too limp after her in lame imitation, but it goes against me a little at first. I have been acquaintance with it now for full four days, and it seems a moon. I am full of cramps, and rheumatisms, and cold internally, so that fire won't warm me ; yet I bear all for virtue's sake. Must I then leave you, gin, rum, brandy, aqua-



vitæ, pleasant jolly fellows? Hang temperance, and he that first invented it!—some Anti-Noahite. C—— has powdered his head, and looks like Bacchus, Bacchus ever sleek and young. He is going to turn sober, but his clock has not struck yet; meantime he pours down goblet after goblet, the second to see where the first is gone, the third to see no harm happens to the second, a fourth to say there is another coming, and a fifth to say he is not sure he is the last.”

In the autumn of this year, the establishment of a Quarterly Magazine, entitled the “Reflector,” opened a new sphere for Lamb’s powers as a humorist and critic. Its editor, Mr. Leigh Hunt, having been educated in the same school, enjoyed many associations and friendships in common with him, and was thus able to excite in Lamb the greatest motive for exertion in the zeal of kindness. In this Magazine appeared some of Lamb’s noblest effusions; his essay “On Garrick and Acting,” which contains the character of Lear, perhaps the noblest criticism ever written, and on the noblest human subject; his delightful “Essays on Hogarth;” his “Farewell to Tobacco,” and several of the choicest of his gayer pieces.



The number of the Quarterly Review, for December 1811, contained an attack upon Lamb, which it would be difficult, as well as painful, to characterize as it deserves. Mr. Weber, in his edition of "Faust," had extracted Lamb's note on the catastrophe of "The Broken Heart," in which Lamb, speaking of that which he regarded as the highest exhibition of tragic suffering which human genius had depicted, dared an allusion which was perhaps too bold for those who did not understand the peculiar feeling by which it was suggested, but which no unprejudiced mind could mistake for the breathing of other than a pious spirit. In reviewing Mr. Weber, the critic, who was also the editor of the Review, thus complains of the quotation,—  
"We have a more serious charge to bring against the editor than the omission of points, or the misapprehension of words. He has polluted his pages with the blasphemies of a poor maniac, who, it seems, once published some detached scenes of the 'Broken Heart.' For this unfortunate creature, every feeling mind will find an apology in his calamitous situation; but for Mr. Weber, we know not where the warmest of his friends will find palliation or excuse." It would be unjust to attri-



bute this paragraph to the accidental association of Lamb in literary undertakings with persons like Mr. Hunt, strongly opposed to the political opinions of Mr. Gifford. It seems rather the peculiar expression of the distaste of a small though acute mind for an original power which it could not appreciate, and which disturbed the conventional associations of which it was master, aggravated by bodily weakness and disease. Notwithstanding this attack, Lamb was prompted by his admiration for Wordsworth's "Excursion" to contribute a review of that work, on its appearance, to the Quarterly, and he anticipated great pleasure in the poet's approval of his criticism; but when the review appeared, the article was so mercilessly mangled by the editor, that Lamb entreated Wordsworth not to read it. For these grievances Lamb at length took a very gentle revenge in the following

## SONNET.

SAINT CRISPIN TO MR. GIFFORD.

All unadvised, and in an evil hour,  
Lured by aspiring thoughts, my son, you dat  
The lowly labours of the "Gentle Craft"  
For learned toils, which blood and spirits sour.  
All things, dear pledge, are not in all men's power;  
The wiser sort of shrub affects the ground;



And sweet content of mind is oftener found  
 In cobbler's parlour, than in critic's bower.  
 The sorest work is what doth cross the grain ;  
 And better to this hour you had been plying  
 The obsequious awl, with well-waxed finger flying,  
 Than ceaseless thus to till a thankless vein :  
 Still teasing muses, which are still denying ;  
 Making a stretching-leather of your brain.

*St. Crispin's Eve.*

Lamb, as we have seen, cared nothing for politics ; yet his desire to serve his friends sometimes induced him to adopt for a short time their view of public affairs, and assist them with a harmless pleasantry. The following epigram, on the disappointment of the Whig associates of the Regent, appeared in the " Examiner."

Ye politicians, tell me, pray,  
 Why thus with woe and care rent ?  
 This is the worst that you can say,  
 Some wind has blown the *Wig* away  
 And left the *Hair Apparent*.

The following, also published in the same paper, would probably have only caused a smile if read by the Regent himself, and may now be republished without offence to any one. At the time when he wrote it, Lamb used to stop any passionate attacks upon the prince, with the smiling remark, "*I love my Regent.*"



## THE TRIUMPH OF THE WHALE.

Io ! Pæan ! Io ! sing,  
 To the finny people's king.  
 Not a mightier whale than this  
 In the vast Atlantic is,  
 Not a fatter fish than he  
 Flounders round the Polar sea.  
 See his blubber—at his gills  
 What a world of drink he swills !  
 From his trunk, as from a spout,  
 Which next moment he pours out.

Such his person.—Next declare,  
 Muse, who his companions are :—  
 Every fish of generous kind  
 Scuds aside, or slinks behind ;  
 But about his presence keep  
 All the monsters of the deep ;  
 Mermaids, with their tails and singing,  
 His delighted fancy stinging ;  
 Crooked dolphins, they surround him ;  
 Dog-like seals, they fawn around him ;  
 Following hard, the progress mark  
 Of the intolerant salt sea shark ;  
 For his solace and relief,  
 Flat-fish are his courtiers chief ;  
 Last, and lowest in his train,  
 Ink-fish (libellers of the main)  
 Their black liquor shed in spite :  
 (Such on earth *the things that write.*)  
 In his stomach, some do say,  
 No good thing can ever stay :  
 Had it been the fortune of it  
 To have swallowed that old prophet,  
 Three days there he'd not have dwell'd,  
 But in one have been expell'd.  
 Hapless mariners are they,  
 Who beguiled (as seamen say)



Deeming him some rock or island,  
Footing sure, safe spot, and dry land,  
Anchor in his scaly rind—  
Soon the difference they find ;  
Sudden plumb ! he sinks beneath them,  
Does to ruthless seas bequeath them.

Name or title what has he ?  
Is he Regent of the Sea ?  
From this difficulty free us,  
Buffon, Banks, or sage Linnæus.  
With his wondrous attributes  
Say what appellation suits ?  
By his bulk, and by his size,  
By his oily qualities,  
This (or else my eyesight fails),  
This should be the Prince of Whales.

The devastation of the Park in the summer of 1814, by reason of the rejoicings on the visit of the Allied Sovereigns, produced the following letter from Lamb to Wordsworth.

## TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

“ Save for a late excursion to Harrow, and a day or two on the banks of the Thames this summer, rural images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the Regent all that was countryfied in the parks is just obliterated. The very colour of green is vanished, the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (*Arabia Arenosa*), not a vestige or hint of grass



ever having grown there; booths and drinking places go all round it, for a mile and a half I am confident—I might say two miles, in circuit—the stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people and provisions, conquers the air, and we are all stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park. Order after order has been issued by Lord Sidmouth in the name of the Regent (acting in behalf of his Royal father) for the dispersion of the varlets, but in vain. The *vis unita* of all the publicans in London, Westminster, Marylebone, and miles round, is too powerful a force to put down. The Regent has raised a phantom which he cannot lay. There they'll stay probably for ever. The whole beauty of the place is gone—that lake-look of the Serpentine—it has got foolish ships upon it—but something whispers to have confidence in nature and its revival—

At the coming of the *milder day*,  
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

Mean time I confess to have smoked one delicious pipe in one of the cleanliest and goodliest of the booths; a tent rather—

‘O call it not a booth!’

erected by the public spirit of Watson, who keeps the Adam and Eve at Pancras, (the ale-houses have all emigrated, with their train of bottles, mugs,



cork-screws, waiters, into Hyde Park—whole ale-houses, with all their ale !) in company with some of the Guards that had been in France, and a fine French girl, habited like a princess of banditti, which one of the dogs had transported from the Garonne to the Serpentine. The unusual scene, in Hyde Park, by candle-light, in open air,—good tobacco, bottled stout,—made it look like an interval in a campaign, a repose after battle. I almost fancied scars smarting, and was ready to club a story with my comrades, of some of my lying deeds. After all, the fireworks were splendid; the rockets in clusters, in trees and all shapes, spreading about like young stars in the making, floundering about in space, (like unbroke horses,) till some of Newton's calculations should fix them; but then they went out. Any one who could see 'em, and the still finer showers of gloomy rain-fire that fell sulkily and angrily from 'em, and could go to bed without dreaming of the last day, must be an hardened atheist.

“ Again let me thank you for your present, and assure you that fireworks and triumphs have not distracted me from receiving a calm and noble enjoyment from it, (which I trust I shall often,) and I sincerely congratulate you on its appearance.



“ With kindest remembrances to you and household, we remain, yours sincerely,

“ C. LAMB and Sister.

“ 9th August, 1814.”

The following are fragments of letters to Coleridge in the same month. The first is in answer to a solicitation of Coleridge for a supply of German books.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ 13th Aug. 1814.

“ Dear Resuscitate,—There comes to you by the vehicle from Lad-lane this day a volume of German; what it is, I cannot justly say, the characters of those northern nations having been always singularly harsh and unpleasant to me. It is a contribution of Dr. ——— towards your wants, and you would have had it sooner but for an odd accident. I wrote for it three days ago, and the Doctor, as he thought, sent it me. A book of like exterior he did send, but being disclosed, how far unlike! It was the ‘Well-bred Scholar,’—a book with which it seems the Doctor laudably fills up those hours which he can steal from his medical avoca-



tions, (Chesterfield, Blair, Beattie, portions from 'The Life of Savage,' make up a prettyish system of morality and the belles lettres, which Mr. Mylne, a schoolmaster, has properly brought together, and calls the collection by the denomination above-mentioned,)—the Doctor had no sooner discovered his error, than he despatched man and horse to rectify the mistake, and with a pretty kind of ingenuous modesty in his note, seemeth to deny any knowledge of the 'Well-bred Scholar;' false modesty surely, and a blush misplaced; for, what more pleasing than the consideration of professional austerity thus relaxing, thus improving! But so, when a child, I remember blushing, being caught on my knees, or doing otherwise some pious and praiseworthy action: *now* I rather love such things to be seen. Henry Crabb Robinson is out upon his circuit, and his books are inaccessible without his leave and key. He is attending the Norfolk Circuit,—a short term, but to him, as to many young lawyers, a long vacation, sufficiently dreary.\* I thought I could do no better than transmit to him, not extracts, but your very letter itself,

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\* A mistake of Lamb's, at which the excellent person referred to may smile, now that he has retired from his profession, and has no business but the offices of kindness.



than which I think I never read any thing more moving, more pathetic, or more conducive to the purpose of persuasion. The Crab is a sour Crab if it does not sweeten him. I think it would draw another third volume of Dodsley out of me; but you say you don't want any English books? Perhaps after all that's as well; one's romantic credulity is for ever misleading one into misplaced acts of foolery. Crab might have answered by this time; his juices take a long time supplying, but they'll run at last,—I know they will,—pure golden pippin. A fearful rumour has since reached me that the Crab is on the eve of setting out for France. If he is in England your letter will reach him, and I flatter myself a touch of the persuasive of my own, which accompanies it, will not be thrown away: if it be, he is a sloe, and no true-hearted crab, and there's an end. For that life of the German conjuror which you speak of, 'Colerus de Vitâ Doctoris vix-Intelligibilis,' I perfectly remember the last evening we spent with Mrs. M—— and Miss B——, in London-street,—(by that token we had rabbits for supper, and Miss B—— prevailed upon me to take a glass of brandy and water after supper, which is not my habit,)—I perfectly remember reading portions of that life in



their parlour, and I think it must be among their packages. It was the very last evening we were at that house. What is gone of that frank-hearted circle, M——, and his gos-lettuces? He ate walnuts better than any man I ever knew. Friendships in these parts stagnate.

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“ I am going to eat turbot, turtle, venison, marrow pudd.,—cold punch, claret, Madeira,—at our annual feast, at half-past four this day. They keep bothering me, (I’m in office,) and my ideas are confused. Let me know if I can be of any service as to books. God forbid the Architectonican should be sacrificed to a foolish scruple of some book-proprietor, as if books did not belong with the highest propriety to those that understand ’em best.

“ C. LAMB.”

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

“ 26th August, 1814.

“ Let the hungry soul rejoice, there is corn in Egypt. Whatever thou hast been told to the contrary by designing friends, who perhaps enquired carelessly, or did not enquire at all, in hope of saving their money, there is a stock of ‘Remorse’



on hand, enough, as Pople conjectures, for seven years' consumption; judging from experience of the last two years. Methinks it makes for the benefit of sound literature, that the best books do not always go off best. Enquire in seven years' time for the 'Rokebys' and the 'Laras,' and where shall they be found?—fluttering fragmentally in some thread-paper—whereas thy 'Wallenstein,' and thy 'Remorse,' are safe on Longman's or Pople's shelves, as in some Bodleian, there they shall remain; no need of a chain to hold them fast—perhaps for ages—tall copies—and people shan't run about hunting for them as in old Ezra's shrievalty they did for a Bible, almost without effect till the great-great-grand-niece (by the mother's side) of Jeremiah or Ezekiel (which was it?) remembered something of a book, with odd reading in it, that used to lie in the green closet in her aunt Judith's bedchamber.

“Thy caterer, Price, was at Hamburgh when last Pople heard of him, laying up for thee like some miserly old father for his generous-hearted son to squander.

“Mr. Charles Aders, whose books also pant for that free circulation which thy custody is sure to give them, is to be heard of at his kinsmen, Messrs.



Jameson and Aders, No. 7, Laurence Pountney-lane, London, according to the information which Crabius with his parting breath left me. Crabius is gone to Paris. I prophesy he and the Parisians will part with mutual contempt. His head has a twist Allemagne, like thine, dear mystic.

“ I have been reading Madame Stael on Germany. An impudent clever woman. But if ‘Faust’ be no better than in her abstract of it, I counsel thee to let it alone. How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fie on such fantasies! But I will not forget to look for Proclus. It is a kind of book when one meets with it one shuts the lid faster than one opened it. Yet I have some bastard kind of recollection that some where, some time ago, upon some stall or other, I saw it. It was either that or Plotinus, or Saint Augustine’s ‘City of God.’ So little do some folks value, what to others, *sc.* to you, ‘well used,’ had been the ‘Pledge of Immortality.’ Bishop Bruno I never touched upon. Stuffing too good for the brains of such ‘a Hare’ as thou describest. May it burst his pericranium, as the gobbets of fat and turpentine (a nasty thought of the seer) did that old dragon in the Apocrypha! May he go mad in trying to understand his author! May he lend the



third volume of him before he has quite translated the second, to a friend who shall lose it, and so spoil the publication, and his friend find it and send it him just as thou or some such less dilatory spirit shall have announced the whole for the press; lastly, may he be hunted by Reviewers, and the devil jug him! Canst think of any other queries in the solution of which I can give thee satisfaction? Do you want any books that I can procure for you? Old Jimmy Boyer is dead at last. Trollope has got his living, worth 1000*l.* a-year net. See, thou sluggard, thou heretic-sluggard, what mightest thou not have arrived at. Lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not *entail* it on thy posterity.

“CHARLES LAMB.”



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